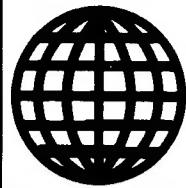


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30 April 1993

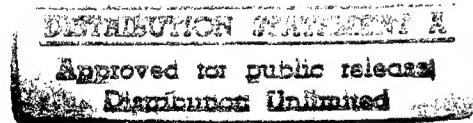


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Near East & South Asia

INDIA



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Near East & South Asia

INDIA

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30 April 1993

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International Affairs

New Agreement With EC Opens New Vistas
93AS0707A Madras THE HINDU in English 3 Mar 93
p 9

[Article by Thomas Abraham]

[Text] Brussels, March 2—India's efforts to build a special relationship with the European Community [EC] has achieved a measure of success with the negotiation of a new agreement which gives India potential access to European telecommunications, electronics and information technology.

The agreement describes India as a "partner in cooperation and development," a term which is considered to signify a more equal relationship than previous cooperation agreements provided for. It has been initialised by both sides but not yet officially signed, and will replace a 1981 document.

The first pact with the EC was a simple trade agreement signed in 1974. This was followed in 1981 by a more ambitious economic and commercial cooperation agreement which also laid the groundwork for regular political exchanges at the Foreign Ministers level. The latest, titled a cooperation agreement on partnership and development, is seen as a model for future understandings between the EC and developing countries in Asia and Latin America.

Human rights concerns met: The EC has, however, made certain that its political concerns especially in the area of human rights have been met. Thus Article 1 begins "Respect for human rights and democratic principles is the basis for the cooperation between the contracting parties and for the provisions of this agreement and it constitutes an essential element of the agreement."

Though this is a standard stipulation that the EC now inserts in its agreements with developing countries, it is probably the first time that any cooperation agreement that India has signed begins with a mention of human rights. Indian diplomats say the agreement only reaffirms what the Constitution provides for, and does not represent any concession on India's part. But the fact that it was necessary to include such a clause in what is essentially an agreement for development cooperation perhaps indicates a certain pessimism about the stability of India's democratic institutions.

Intellectual property rights, the environment, and establishing a favourable climate for foreign private investment, all issues that the EC is keen on find a place in the agreement.

The article on intellectual property rights commits both sides "to ensure, as far as their laws, regulations and policies allow, that suitable and effective protection is provided for intellectual property rights, including patents, trade or service marks, copyright and similar rights,

geographical designations (including marks of origin), industrial design and integrated circuit topographics, reinforcing this protection where desirable." The Uruguay Round provisions on intellectual property which India will probably commit itself to will however be much more rigorous than this rather general statement of intention.

Private investment: On private investment, the agreement takes note of India's signature of the MIGA (Multilateral Investments Guarantee Agency) convention, and commits India to protect investments between the EC and India "on the basis of the principles of non-discrimination and reciprocity."

To judge what India will get out of the agreement, it must be noted that the EC has a hierarchy of agreements governing its relationship with other countries. Countries such as India occupy the lower rungs on the EC's ladder of relationships. Its closest links are with the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) countries who are eventually expected to become full EC members. At a slightly lower level, are the so-called association agreements the Community has with Turkey, Cyprus and Malta, countries which have applied for EC membership.

East Europe too is knocking on the doors of the Community which has signed a series of association and partnership agreements with countries of this region to lay the ground work for their eventual membership.

Special arrangements: The EC's relationship with developing countries has been to a large extent on the basis of the ties between individual members of the Community and their former colonies. The former French colonies of Africa have benefited most from the EC. The special arrangements that France had with these countries have been extended to the EC through the Lome Conventions, which link 69 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to the Community. Besides large amounts of concessional aid, the Lome Convention countries enjoy preferential access to EC markets, and 99 per cent of their products come in duty free.

The rest of the developing world, described as the ALA (Asia Latin America) countries, have agreements which do not offer preferential access to the EC market, except under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) which all developing countries benefit from, whether or not they have an understanding with the Community.

Exceptional: India can be pleased with what it has got from the EC. "We have got something exceptional in terms of the areas that have been covered by the agreement," said Dr. Arjun Sengupta, India's Ambassador in Brussels. The broad areas for cooperation include energy and energy efficiency, telecommunications, information technology, environment and natural resources, and trade promotion.

Aid not prime focus: Aid, or development cooperation figures in the agreement, though it is not the prime focus.

POLITICAL

India is the largest single recipient of EC aid. Since 1975, India has received 1.4 billion ECU (European Currency Unit), largely for rural development projects of which the best known has been Operation Flood. But the aid relationship has often been prickly, and the slow pace of utilisation has led the Community to freeze fresh commitments until the pace of absorption improves.

The real significance of the agreement is its potential as a source of technology and know-how, and as Dr. Sen-gupta remarked. "The agreement is a framework which we can now use to build up our capabilities in different areas especially in science and technology. It is for us now to build on the potential that has been created."

Readiness, Extent of German Cooperation Told
93AS0637A Madras THE HINDU in English 25 Feb 93 p 18

[Article by R. Gopalakrishnan; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Germany, India's largest industrial partner in terms of collaboration agreements, is set to expand its presence here in a big way, going by the plans announced by leading German companies and their joint venture firms at the Tenth Indian Engineering Trade Fair (IETF '93). But more importantly was the perceptions of German leaders, both government and the industry, regarding India's developmental needs.

One was that, as in Germany, it is the medium and small industries, especially medium, who could lead India's march towards an innovative and industrially competitive economy in the era of deregulation. Another was the role of 'social network' (social security) and education and training as basic need of both a stable democracy and industrialisation.

The German leaders drew a parallel between the social unrest—attack on foreigners in Germany and communal tensions in India—to emphasise that both had their roots in economic crisis. In Germany, the combined effect of the recession and high cost of reconstructing former East Germany, and in India, economic backwardness led to unemployment and fuelled social tensions. Therefore a determined effort to deal with problems of growth 'in an increasingly unstable global economy' would help both countries to meet the challenges.

During the week-long fair was organise by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CID, Dr H.L. Kolb, Minister for Economy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr Wieck, the German Ambassador, and the German industry leaders said that India's vast reservoir of low-cost skilled manpower, including engineers and scientists (rather than unskilled labour) and Germany's technological prowess could, and ought to combine to help the European power bear the impact of global recession and the problems of unification, while helping India reach its goal of faster growth.

It is in the light of these perceptions that one would be able to appreciate the decisions announced by both Mannesmann Demag and Siemens to set up R & D centres in India. But commitments and plans were also heard from various other enterprises, both the big and not-so-big, who occupied 6,000 sq. m. in the Indo-German Pavilions.

For instance, Asea Brown Boveri, the Indian partner of ABB Ag, Manheim, will make the whole range of power plant equipment and will be the only private manufacturer in this segment where now the lone player is the public sector Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL). ABB has shortlisted three States for locating the power plant complex—Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat—based on availability of infrastructure of the ABB group and cost of transportation.

ABB, with eight plants in India serving the power equipment, power transmission and transport sectors, has a record of reverse transfer of SF₆ circuit breaker technology to its principal. It has recently set up an engineering design division to increase the indigenous component in its power plant jobs. After securing the contract for the 650 MW combined cycle power plant for the NTPC [National Thermal Power Corporation] at Gandhar as part of a consortium lead by Marubeni and ABB AG, the company has bid, with NTPC, for the 800 MW Bawana combined cycle plant to be put up by the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking (DESU). (The ABB group of companies in India include Flakt, Widia, SAE, Gujarat Prime Movers and Integran Hind Control.)

Krupp, the Ruhr-based steel and machine building conglomerate of Germany, will supply the new surface mining machinery and edible oil plant-making technologies to its collaborator, Buckau Wolf.

Besides its proposal for an R & D Centre, Siemens is entering the telephone switching equipment sector in India, with the State-owned Webel (West Bengal).

Jungheinrich, a medium industry of Hamburg described as the world's largest manufacturer of electrical and battery-operated trucks and specialising in warehouse stackers and systems, will transfer knowhow for a new high-reach truck to its partner, Just's Engineering, Bombay. According to Mr Oliver Blaha, regional export manager of Jungheinrich, the convenient and space-saving system would be useful for chain stores and warehouses. They were likely to be deployed in a 30,000 sq. ft. supermarket proposed to be built in Delhi by a German firm.

In Enterprise '93 the IETF pavilion devoted exclusively to the small sector, the Pune-based SSI, Metal IMPregnators India, put on show a new product and process for sealing porous components and castings, with technical and financial cooperation from a family-owned German firm, IMPragnier GmbH.

Germany is strong not only in mechanical and electronics engineering but also in plant-making for the chemical and fertilizer industries. Bilateral cooperation in this sector, which is considerable at present, is however, constrained by lack of infrastructure, especially storage capacity and terminals for inputs like ethylene and polyvinyl monomer and so downstream user industries are restricted to the west coast. Motor Industries Co (MICO), the leader in spark plugs and fuel injection equipment and partner of Robert Bosch, received the ISO certification at a brief ceremony in its pavilion.

Three of the 16 German States were at the IETF. Dr Krebs, Minister for Economy and Technology of Nordhein-Westfalen, the western most State capital: Dusseldorf) and industrial hub which accounts for more than 20 per cent of the country's GNP as also exports, hoped that cooperation with States in India, especially in manpower development, would be feasible. Coming from a mineral-rich State, which includes big names in German industry like Thyssen, Krupp, Mannesmann-Demag and KHD, Dr Krebs was keen to interact with the eastern States here which have a concentration of mining and metallurgical industries.

If the Rourkela Steel Plant was Germany's biggest contribution to industrialisation of India, the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, remains the single largest bilateral technical cooperation programme. Among important German development agencies represented at the fair were: GTZ (the German Agency for Technical Cooperation) which commits annually DM 35 to 40 million for supporting CSIR [Council for Scientific and Industrial Research] laboratories and academic and research institutions, the Indo-German Export Promotion Project (IGEP) and the Indo-German Investment Promotion Service, both based in Delhi, the Indo-German Tool Room Programme which operates with some State Governments, Treuhand, the agency for privatisation of industries in eastern Germany.

The Indian Ambassador to Germany, Mr K.K.S. Rana said the two countries would soon negotiate for a 'complete overhaul' of the double taxation agreement (DTA) signed in the mid-Eighties. The new DTA and the proposed bilateral agreement on investment protection can be expected to catalyse economic and business cooperation between the two countries.

Reportage on German Chancellor Kohl's Visit

19 Feb Activities

93AS0635A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
20 Feb 93 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, Feb 19—The German Chancellor, Dr Helmut Kohl, today asked India to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), and sugar-coated his suggestion by saying that such a step would help Indo-German technical and economic cooperation.

He added that India was significant for Germany because it is the biggest expanding market in southeast Asia. He however did not quantify the likely German investment.

But in a special and concrete gesture to Calcutta, Chancellor Kohl gifted away the Rs 15 lakh prize money he got as part of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award to a private hospital in Howrah.

Speaking at a banquet hosted for him by the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the German leader stressed the need for global nuclear disarmament in the context of the end of the Cold War, and said his country was willing to have a "comprehensive dialogue" with India on nuclear disarmament.

Responding to Mr. Rao's appeal to the West to "hold in check" nations that were encouraging terrorism (a direct reference to Pakistan), Dr Kohl said signing the NPT would be a step in that direction.

In his address, Mr. Narasimha Rao expressed India's strong resolve to fight any overt or covert attempts to undermine the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

But although Dr Kohl allayed some of India's fears about foreign investment suffering on account of the post-demolition instability, he promised nothing concrete for the moment.

Earlier, speaking at the first round of delegation-level talks, Dr Kohl emphasised the importance of Indo-German relations not only in terms of historicity but because "our perception is that good relations between India and the industrialised nations are a positive factor for international stability."

At one point, Chancellor Kohl referred to the efforts for a European union and, assuring that a common Euro-market would not be protectionist, said, "It will be good for a market of 300 million people to interact with a market of over 800 million people (India)."

But the major part of German capital inflow remains a matter for further discussion, with the Germans deciding to first make an assessment of the "specific areas of priority" and get back to New Delhi at a later date.

In a one-to-one meeting with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, Dr Kohl suggested that this list of priority sectors—both for consumer trade and joint ventures—could be drawn up over the next 10 months, after which the two leaders can review the position and draw up an action plan.

In principle, the German leader lauded the Indian economic reform programme and said the opening up had "substantially improved prospects of German investment." He dwelt, in this context, on the investment plans of Siemens, but did not offer more.

Significantly, the two delegations, which were led by Prime Minister Rao and Chancellor Kohl, had a meeting with German businessmen as well. The main focus of this meeting was further simplifying the procedural aspects of investment.

Mr. Narasimha Rao gave a brief assessment of the internal situation in India to the German delegation and reiterated his government's commitment to the economic reform programme.

He also outlined India's "constructive approach" to various global issues including environment protection, human rights and nuclear non-proliferation and emphasised the need for expanding economic, industrial, technological and cultural relations with Germany.

Both at the head of state and foreign secretary level (Mr. Mani Dixit had a separate meeting with his German counterpart, Mr. Dieter Kastrup) India expressed the desire for the greater "strengthening and democratisation" of the United Nations, and found the German leadership willing to cooperate.

Chancellor Kohl, in fact, also wished his country could help India at the Uruguay round of General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) talks and bring them to a "successful conclusion." He also responded positively to Mr. Narasimha Rao's view that North-South dialogue should be resumed.

Award Ceremony, Talks With Sharma

93AS0635B Madras *THE HINDU* in English 20 Feb 93 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 19—The German Chancellor, Dr. Helmut Kohl, today received the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding for 1990 from the President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, at Rashtrapati Bhavan and promptly donated the award money of Rs. 15 lakhs to a non-Government Indo-German health care project in Howrah, Calcutta.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Kohl said that even though the reconstruction in erstwhile East Germany and assistance for the former East Bloc countries "require great efforts from us Germans," his country "will continue to pursue a development policy based on partnership and India will remain a major partner."

But since Government aid alone did not suffice, he said he would like to pay a special tribute to the deep commitment of non-Governmental organisations. It was in this context that he had decided to donate the award money to the Howrah project.

As regards the situation in his country, Mr. Kohl said encouraging progress had been made in erstwhile East Germany and he was confident "that in a few years East Germany will be one of the most modern industrial locations in Europe." However, he said, "it will be even more difficult to overcome the psychological burden of

the Communist dictatorship on human relations than it will be to solve the economic problems."

Dr. Kohl, stressing the need for confidence-building measures, hoped India and its neighbours would succeed in their efforts to eradicate sources of political tension as a prerequisite to comprehensive disarmament.

Chancellor of unity: Describing Dr. Kohl as the "Chancellor of Unity," Dr. Sharma said his bold, imaginative and sensitive leadership in Germany, over a decade, had contributed most significantly to historic advances towards North-South co-operation, lessening of tensions in Europe and elsewhere, and the building of a better future for all.

The President said India looked forward to partnering Germany in strengthening the framework of environment-friendly and sustainable development. India and Germany also had to work together for a world free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. However, Dr. Sharma said, "We do believe that when it comes to rights and obligations, it is essential that there is no discrimination."

In his welcome address, the Vice-President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, said substantial cooperation between our two countries can well point the way to a larger and harmonious adjustment between the developed and the developing countries, certainly between India and Europe.

Those who attended the function included the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, several of his Cabinet colleagues such as the Home Minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, distinguished citizens and diplomats.

Ties excellent: In the morning, Dr. Kohl was accorded a ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Talking to reporters, he said Germany's relations with India were excellent. The ties between the two countries were historical and traditional and efforts should be made to strengthen them in fields such as trade.

Replying to a question, the German Chancellor said it was important for Europe to have a dialogue with the outside world, but it must speak in one political voice.

Later he visited Rajghat where he paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi. He watered a Kadamb tree which he had planted in the Rajghat lawns in 1986.

Talks With Rao

93AS0635C Calcutta *THE SUNDAY STATESMAN* in English 21 Feb 93 p 12

[First paragraph *THE SUNDAY STATESMAN* comment]

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 2—While the Chancellor said the liberalization process was irreversible, the Prime Minister underlined India's commitment to economic reforms.

An understanding on the desirability of reviving the concept of a North-South dialogue, and a promised plan of action by German businessmen following the latest contact with their Indian counterparts were among the "achievements" of the visit of the Federal German Chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl.

He has suggested that a list of specific proposals be drawn up with a 10-month implementation period, and the achievement of those targets be monitored by both countries. When the German business delegations returned home they would prepare a summary of their discussions, and it could serve as a sort of action plan. It would be forwarded to India for necessary action.

Briefing reporters, an External Affairs Ministry spokesman said that during meetings the Prime Minister told the Chancellor about his assessment of the internal situation, underlining the Government's commitment to economic reforms, mentioned India's desire to strengthen and democratize the United Nations, and outlined India's practical and constructive approach on global issues in areas such as environment, human rights and non-proliferation.

In the bilateral context, the Government wanted to lay emphasis on expanding economic, industrial, technological and cultural relations, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao said.

Chancellor Kohl conveyed to the Prime Minister the German Government's views on a variety of subjects. He stressed that importance was being given to relations with India not only because of the long-standing traditional and historic ties but also because India was emerging as the largest market in this region. It was his assumption that good relations between India and leading members of the industrialized groups of countries were a positive factor for international stability.

Referring to what the Prime Minister had said on economic reforms and enhanced economic cooperation, Mr. Kohl felt that it was the German Government's perception that though there might be difficulties it was convinced that the liberalization process was now irreversible.

A unified Europe would not be protectionist. Germany was against protectionism, Mr. Kohl said. The unification process should be viewed on a macro-economic level as leading to a large market of 330 million people, and in the bilateral Indian context, interacting with a market of the more than 800 million people here.

The Chancellor emphasized that Germany's economic policies were necessarily outward looking. Germany had to export to sustain itself—another important reason for

giving due attention to the large market represented by India, especially when India was rapidly opening up to the global economy.

20 Feb Breakfast Meeting

93AS0635D Madras THE HINDU in English 21 Feb 93
p 6

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 20—The German Chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl, has assured Indian industrialists that on his return home he will meet representatives of German companies that have invested here to frame a new 'active and aggressive' strategy to boost German investment in India.

"I am personally committed to this," Mr. Kohl told a breakfast meeting jointly organised by CCII [expansion not given], FICCI [Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry], Assocham [Associated Chamber of Commerce] and the Indo-German Chambers of Commerce here today. India should also take its new market friendly economic reforms programme to the logical end, he said. After the war Germany gained from the theory of socialist market economy initiated by former Chancellor Erald Ludwig. In a lighter vein Mr. Kohl remarked "You should concentrate on Ludwig and not on Marx."

New stage: According to Mr. Kohl, his visit to India had come at a time when global politics had reached a new stage. "Since 1990, many things have changed. Lenin-grad has been renamed St. Petersburg. My friend Boris Yeltsin was here. The Communist ideology has collapsed and the North-South dialogue has acquired a new dimension." Against this background, Mr. Kohl said he would use his visit to India to impart "a new basis, new dimension and new quality to Indo-German relations." The bilateral ties should not merely be governed by economic and political issues but also cultural in view of the traditional cultural relations between the two nations.

In response to a query from the Assocham President, Dr. N.M. Dhuldhoya, about the visa problem faced by even technically qualified Indians intending to go to Germany, the Chancellor said even Germans faced similar problems. This was one of the points in the proposed new agenda he discussed with the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. The agenda covering common areas of interest will be spread over the next ten to twelve months. As part of this exercise the Prime Minister will also visit Germany within a year.

Excellent opportunity: The German Chancellor discussed the impediments to foreign investment flowing into India and the urgent need to abolish them. According to Mr. Kohl, with the initiation of the new economic policy he could see India progressing and the excellent investment opportunity created by it.

Mr. Kohl firmly believed that German investment in India would increase to a large scale even as the Germans realised the importance of providing developmental aid to India.

Aid to East Europe: Mr. Kohl said Germany had done much more than any country in extending assistance to East Europe, Russia and other member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Since 1988 Germans gave 36 billion Deutsche Marks to East and Central Europe and 80 billion DM to the former Soviet Union in aid which was equal to 60 per cent of assistance by western States. Mr. Kohl remarked: "I stand behind this and I bear the responsibility." He said he was unable to understand why other countries in Europe were shy of supporting market economy in Central Europe and CIS. "If these countries again go back to totalitarianism or there is military takeover, the consequences will be much more expensive," Mr. Kohl warned.

Cooperation in Power Projects

93AS0635E Madras *THE HINDU* in English 21 Feb 93
p 6

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 20—Siemens and five other German and Indian partners today signed a cooperation agreement for two power projects in the presence of the German Chancellor, Dr. Helmut Kohl, during his visit to the 10th Indian Engineering Trade Fair.

The two projects together will have an estimated investment of Rs [Rupees] 90 billions.

Under the agreement, Siemens Ag. Deutsche Babcock AG Oberhausen, TAKRAF GmbH Leipzig and MAN Gutehoffnungshütte AG Oberhausen have formed a consortium with the Indian company, McNally Bharat Engineering Limited (MBE). The consortium will join the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) for construction in Tamil Nadu of a 1500-MW lignite fired power plant. The energy will be supplied to the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB).

In addition, Siemens and Tata Electric Companies have signed an agreement for the "Nagothane" power project, a combined 400MW gas-steam turbine plant, for the supply of power to the Maharashtra State Electricity Board.

The German Chancellor said the fair had lived up to his expectations. "I expected to see an excellent exhibition and that is what I have seen," he said. "It is the sign of an emerging country. I have seen a small example. I am impressed by the quality and finish."

22 Feb Press Conference

93AS0635F Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 23 Feb 93 pp 1, 17

[Text] New Delhi, February 22—The German Chancellor, Dr Helmut Kohl, today made it clear that India's

opposition to signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) would have no impact on Indo-German relations.

The issue could have different dimensions in different regions and he had every reason to respect India's views.

Nevertheless, he felt efforts should be made to eliminate New Delhi's reservations.

He noted that both India and Germany realised the danger posed by the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear non-proliferation was of "enormous importance" and it was necessary to "act now." It was in this context that he had offered to have a comprehensive dialogue with India.

Dr Kohl, who was addressing a news conference at the end of his five-day visit, underscored the need for building mutual confidence between India and Pakistan to pave the way for a settlement of the Kashmir question. A solution should be found bilaterally on the basis of the 1972, Shimla treaty, he said.

During the hour-long press conference, Dr Kohl covered wide-ranging issues, including the problems being faced in negotiating an early GATT agreement and European economic unity. He noted the decline in Germany's development assistance to India but explained that Bonn had commitments to the Warsaw Pact countries which had embarked on the path of market economy. The other developed countries, he felt, were not doing enough for them.

He said assistance to India would be stepped up and it would retain its priority position in the German aid programme. Currently, financial assistance to India amounted to DM 350 million.

Dr Kohl stated that the question of becoming a permanent member of the U.N. security council was not a priority item on the German agenda, though India or Japan might say that it no longer reflected the new world realities. But he agreed that the U.N. had to be strengthened to enable it to check aggression, ensure world peace and safeguard human rights.

He emphasised that he wanted to lend a "new quality" to Indo-German relations. The Indian Government was trying to improve the infrastructure which was essential for expansion of trade and investment. Germany could help improve communication and transport facilities and he was confident that the endeavours of Siemens and Asea Brown Boveri would be successful.

Referring to the growing opposition to the Maastricht treaty in the United Kingdom, Dr Kohl hoped the House of Commons would ratify it. Even if it failed to do so, the other European Community members would go ahead with it. In 1995, Sweden, Norway and possible Finland would join it, further strengthening European unity. He would also like India to have access to the European market, he said.

Underlining the importance of an early conclusion of the GATT negotiations, the Chancellor said, the longer it was delayed, the more difficult it would be to arrive at a settlement. In a few weeks, France would hold a referendum on the subsidy issue, followed by a general election. He regretted that though the world was close to a settlement last summer in Munich, no agreement was finalised.

Referring to the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's criticism of the European stand on agricultural subsidy, Dr Kohl said he did not want to create any controversy. He could, if he desired, also criticise various subsidies given by the U.S. government to sectors like armaments and defence research. But "it is more important to have a dialogue between us than about each other."

Dr Kohl felt there should be greater stress on expanding cultural relations and stated that a festival of Germany would be held in this country on the pattern of the Indian festival held in Bonn in September 1991.

Referring to his talks with the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao and other leaders, he said that the more India pushed ahead with liberalisation the more it would get integrated in the global economy. Dr Kohl recalled his suggestion for drawing up an agreed programme for implementation of selected schemes within a time frame and said Mr. Rao could do some "stock-taking" if he visited Bonn within 10 months.

While referring to his meeting with Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, he recalled Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's contribution to world peace and security and stressed the very deep bonds between the two countries.

Mr. Kohl emphatically denied a suggestion that arms were being sent to Croatia from the erstwhile East Germany. The Germans were not supplying weapons to any of the warring factions and wanted the conflict in former Yugoslavia to end as early as possible.

Analyst on Press Conference

93AS0635G Madras THE HINDU in English 23 Feb 93
p 1

[Article by K.K. Katyal]

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 22—The German Chancellor, Dr. Helmut Kohl, today dispelled the impression that his country's relationship with India would suffer because of their divergent positions on the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty [NPT]. This was his view even though he would like India to accede to the Treaty, because of the changed security climate.

At a press conference at the conclusion of his five-day visit to India, Dr. Kohl summed up optimistically the outcome of his talks with the Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, apart from replying to questions on various issues, bilateral, regional and global. His opening statement, reflecting the upbeat mood in the bilateral context, touched upon the NPT briefly. Equally brief was

his reference to it, in response to a query. Germany and India agreed on the dangers of unchecked nuclear non-proliferation, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, he said, adding that, to him, the NPT was of enormous importance.

Referring to the potential of a conflict in the region, he called for an agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons which, he conceded, was also India's objective. As in his speech at the Prime Minister's dinner, Dr. Kohl expressed his readiness for a comprehensive dialogue with India on this subject.

The opening statement also made a case for India and Pakistan resolving their problems, especially the Kashmir issue. Germany, according to him, had friendly relations with both the countries and was greatly interested in the building of trust between them, through bilateral dialogue, which would be helpful to the stability of the region. But he told a questioner that Germany had not suggested any specific solution nor offered its good offices. He favoured the Shimla Agreement as the basis of the Indo-Pak dialogue.

An eminent partner: His Government, said Dr. Kohl, had sympathy for India and admiration for its secular democracy. He described India as a partner of greater political importance—"We would like to extend our cooperation in future and give a new quality to it." As he saw it, India's economic policies would facilitate its integration with the world economy. On his return to Bonn, he would see that the agreements reached here were implemented as quickly as possible. Despite Germany's financial burdens, India, he said, would remain an eminent partner.

It was, however, clear from his observations that Germany's obligations in regard to Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union were of prime importance to him "because everything that happens there has a bearing on our position ... because if the clock is turned back in Russia, we will have to bear a heavy cost." Germany accounted for 50 per cent of the total external aid to the former Soviet Union—he mentioned this point, while wanting others to contribute more and to show joint interest. In matters of development aid, the former States of the Soviet Union had to be taken into account and "in India we will try to make our cooperation more efficient."

Rapid progress expected: When a questioner talked of his guaranteeing investment, Dr. Kohl said he had not come here to give any guarantee but to deepen bilateral relations and to give it a new quality. He spoke of the importance of improvement in infra-structure and was certain that there would be rapid progress in areas like communication and transport and greater success in investment by the small and medium sectors.

As for the U.N., Dr. Kohl felt its reform was "on the world-wide agenda" as its structure did not reflect the present realities. But Germany was not making a push for permanent membership of the Security Council and

this matter was not his Government's top priority. He was for an early settlement of the trade negotiations under the GATT auspices. He was confident that the Maastricht Treaty would be ratified by the U.K. and Denmark. However, in the case of non-ratification by them, the remaining 10 members, according to him, would go ahead with the integration process in Europe. In 1995, he expected four other countries—Austria, Norway, Sweden and Finland—to join the European Community.

Pacts Signed During Armenian Minister's Visit

*93AS0712A Madras THE HINDU in English
12 Mar 93 p 9*

[Text] New Delhi, March 11—India and Armenia today institutionalised relations by signing a "Foreign Office Consultation Protocol." Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. A.G. Navasardyan, and the Foreign Secretary, Mr. J.N. Dixit, signed the protocol marking the first direct contact between the two countries after New Delhi recognised the former Soviet republic in December 1991.

The Armenian Minister is on a four-day visit which began on Wednesday.

The two sides also agreed on a Trade and Economic arrangement which assumes significance in the context of the reconstruction effort still required in Armenia following the serious destruction to its infrastructure caused by a devastating earthquake in 1988. India then sent Rs [Rupees] 4.7 crores in cash and assistance in kind worth Rs. 2 crores.

Exploitation of Nationals Working in Middle East Detailed

93AS0681A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 15 Mar 93 p 4

[Article by Safdar Rizvi: "Indian Laborers Face Persecution"]

[Text] During the last three decades, due to increased poverty and unemployment in the country, the greed of migrating overseas to quickly become rich has multiplied. An average Indian, with the exception of highly qualified professionals such as engineers, doctors or scientists, seeking employment in foreign lands and especially in Arab countries is generally a victim of desperation. Sandwiched in between oppression, hardship, and denial of justice, the number of such Indian men and women compelled to live the life of slaves in Arab countries is in the millions. To return to their homeland they have neither the money, papers, nor the courage to face their families. As a result they continue to live a life of misery and repression.

The labor laws of the Gulf countries are also unable to rescue these Indian laborers because the laws are written to wholly favor the Arabs. Every person who is admitted

under these laws stays under the full control and discretion of his master or sponsor. Several Gulf countries also require the signature of the sponsor on the exit visa for these laborers to obtain permission to leave the country. This condition prevents the Indian embassies from assisting their countrymen in their effort to return to India.

Repression of these laborers, bound for foreign lands, starts right here in their own country. Agents are authorized by the government to recruit laborers for Gulf countries. These agents have a network of offices in Bombay, Delhi, Madras, and Calcutta, and they retain sub-agents in many other large cities. These government-approved agents always look forward to sending laborers to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait because of fat commissions. Those Arab citizens who need servants or laborers send visas from their countries to these agents. From time to time the desirous Arabs also come to India with visas in their hands.

These agents or sub-agents, after obtaining visas, advertise in newspapers and develop a list of such poor and unemployed men and women who wish to go to the Gulf countries to earn money. They are made to dream pictures of plenty and wealth. For example they are told that there is untold money, that there they can earn more money in a month than they would ever dream of earning here in a year. The agents extract large sums of money, like 30,000 to 50,000 Rupees [Rs], depending on the means of the person, in the wake of these sweet dreams. From this fat amount the agent generally reimburses the person for a one-way fare which normally amounts to 10-12 thousand Rs.

For the recruits, soon after arriving in the Gulf countries starts the endless scene of dream scattering. All their dreams shatter. In the expectation of "good employment" they get a laborer's job, and instead of a hefty salary they are given a token amount. Almost all of the visas issued by the Gulf countries, and especially by Saudi Arabia, are for Muslims. But the agents change the names of the Indian laborers and turn them into Muslims. If a visa is for work in the fields, the agents inform the Indian laborer that he has to work in an orchard; in case the visa is for a driver, he is told the work is to drive a luxurious car, while in reality the laborer is assigned to drive heavy trucks on long routes.

Those Indians who have returned from Saudi Arabia have a long list of adverse experiences. According to them the people of Saudi Arabia do not work themselves, instead they relax and enjoy. They employ Indian labor in their houses and businesses because they can hire the unemployed Indian labor at inexpensive rates. The Indian men arriving in Saudi Arabia are called "Siddiq" and the women are called "Khaddama." In Arabic these terms are used for friends, but in actual practice the Indian labor is treated as a slave. Saudi owners are called "Kafeel" and these "Kafeels" use the slaves for anything

they desire them to do. In order to make sure that these slaves do not run away, "Kafeels" deprive them of their passports on arrival.

Saudi Arabia enforces Islamic laws, and as such even if the Indian laborer chooses to file a complaint with a labor court, he is denied the right to be heard. Those who persist are told to bring a return ticket to India and are assured of being allowed to go. In a country where he is not even fairly paid, how is it possible for the lowly paid laborer to buy a ticket worth 10 to 12 thousand Rs? As a result he keeps on living the life of a slave in tyranny for years. When an Indian woman enters the house of a "Kafeel" as a maid, she never comes out of that house. For all practical purposes these "Khaddamas" are treated as personal property.

Similar practices are prevalent in Kuwait. The Kuwaiti sponsors sometimes physically abuse 35 to 40 thousand Indian maids working there, lock them up in isolation, and at times rape them too. At times they are also not paid for months. On an average one distressed maid per day is said to have approached the Indian embassy to seek help. The Indian chancery has rented a residence, which houses 25 to 30 maids at any given time, at a monthly rent of 60 thousand Rs, in the Dasma section of Kuwait City to solve this problem. The Kuwaiti labor laws also fully favor the Kuwaitis. According to these laws anyone who goes to Kuwait for employment is dependent on the whim of his sponsoring employer. Until such time that the sponsor signs his exit visa an employee is not permitted to leave the country. This law not only applies to the labor class but at times professional doctors and engineers are also not immune to its clutches.

It is sad that our government and the foreign ministry act as silent spectators of such acts of oppression and suffering unloaded on Indians in the Gulf countries. The responsibility of safeguarding the basic human rights and dignity of these countrymen of ours who remit millions of Rs home in foreign currency, is certainly that of our government. Our government should exert pressure on all Gulf governments, especially Saudi Arabia, to change their labor laws, and make sure that Indian employees are not subjected to such inhuman treatment and torture.

Regional Affairs

Pakistan Said Conducting Propaganda War *93AS0668A Pakistan Said Conducting Propaganda War*

[Article by Kranti Kumar Sharma: "Why is This Propaganda War Unnoticed?"]

[Text] The Pakistani news media have been carrying out a tirade against India for a long time. Time and again our news media is told about the need for countering this tirade and informing the people of real facts. It is unfortunate that our government is sitting there with a

blindfold on its eyes and cotton stuffed in its ears about this situation. Before this budget session began, Pramod Mahajan of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] had asked in the Rajya Sabha that the government be asked to start a third television channel on the Doordarshan to counter the Pakistani propaganda over Kashmir that is being spread through satellite channels. He especially mentioned that Pakistan had bought a satellite from a company in Hong Kong to start this propaganda. Fabricated stories about human rights violations by Indian security forces in Kashmir were being aired on Pakistan Television's second channel. These stories are watched in many Asian countries. In this situation, the home and foreign ministries should seriously take note of the negative effect of such programs on the people here and abroad, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should respond to this Pakistani propaganda and explain our side here and in other countries.

Repeating the statements issued in 1991 with some changes in words in 1993 shows our government's incompetence and the self-destructive status quo on a very important national issue. The government may be able to silence the opposition members in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha with such ceremonial answers, but it cannot silence the Pakistani broadcast media. The Pakistani radio, television, and other media have used all kinds of ugly and imaginary approaches against India in this propaganda war. This did not start today, it has been breaking all ethics for the last four years. In order to attain its depraved goals, the Pakistani media issue new accusations against the Indian security forces. They are being called assassins of innocent people and the persecutors who rape women. This whole strategy is based on Hitler's assistant Goebbels' principle that, if a lie is repeated 200 times it becomes a truth.

In their zeal for presenting such despicable truth as believable, Pakistani media do not hesitate in ridiculously misrepresenting statistics and totally senseless distortion of facts. There are many interesting examples of this practice. For example, the Pakistan Television informed in its English news bulletin on 15 December 91, "The Indian security forces killed 20,000 innocent Muslims during the last two years." The same evening, the Urdu news bulletin informed at 0900, "The campaign to merge Jammu-Kashmir with Pakistan has spread to all fourteen districts." At the same time, declaring thousands of people who were still alive to have been killed, Pakistani Television provided figures about people being killed in Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Rajaouri, Leh, and Kirgil in huge numbers. It is common knowledge that the effect of terrorist activities in this district is minimal.

In spite of all this, Pakistani Television announced in its news bulletin that the Indian security forces killed 142 in Jammu district, 231 in Kathua, 371 in Leh, 80 in Punch, 200 in Kirgil, 26 in Rajaouri, and 9 innocent Muslims in Udhampur. It is important to know that all these districts are in Jammu and Laddakh divisions. The Pakistani Television "martyred" only 65 people in Kashmir's

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agitated district of Pulvama. Now, if we consider these figures to be accurate, this would be a totally new fact for the world that the suppression in Jammu region is worse than in Kashmir. Interestingly, Pakistani Television gave all this information and referred to a human rights organization without mentioning its name. Pakistani Television also stated that 1,000 people were killed in Jammu in various interrogation centers, 20,000 were jailed, and 1,500 cases were being tried in Srinagar courts.

After this Pakistani Television bulletin, a government spokesman here told us that actually 1,016 persons were killed in various violent incidents, and 750 of these were shot by Pakistan-trained terrorists. These include 400 Kashmiri pandits and Kashmiri Muslims whom the terrorists have killed after accusing them of being informers for the Indian government. In addition, about 200 people were killed in crossfirings in various skirmishes. The government spokesman said that 1,348 terrorists were killed during this period, and of these 777 were killed while trying to enter Indian territory from Pakistan.

We can conclude that if the numbers of Indian soldiers being killed that are presented on Pakistani Television is correct, then India would have lost half of its troops by now. On average, the Pakistani Television kills 30 Indian soldiers. At this rate, more than 20,000 Indian soldiers were killed on Pakistani Television in 1991. In addition to that, according to them, Indian soldiers have killed more than 20,000 innocent persons in Kashmir. It is clear that Yamraj [god of death] may not have the right to kill so many people, but the Pakistani Television has that right! Pakistani Television goes so far as to say that Indian security forces burned 637 people alive during the last two years and 2,000 children were cut to pieces. Pakistani Television has become so blind and inhuman that even the inhumanity of the terrorists would be amazed at it. Distorting facts and presenting fake figures is an old hobby with it; however, we did not expect such senseless propaganda.

Another sad aspect of Pakistani propaganda is that it gets help from Indian human rights groups and people close to the Indian news media. The so-called Indian human rights groups consider Indian security forces' treatment of terrorists and those who provide them refuge suppression of human rights. The Pakistani media uses their reports to make their propaganda appear factual and to give India a bad name in the whole world. According to intelligence sources, some employees and officials of the Srinagar television had cooperated with Pakistani Television in the production of its famous documentary film, "Kashmir is Burning." This documentary was not only aired on Pakistani Television, but also was shown in Pakistani movie houses. This documentary shows incidents of burning buildings with the commentary that the Indian security forces were burning these houses, committing atrocities on innocent Kashmiris, and then accusing the terrorists of starting those fires. The truth is that the Srinagar Doordarshan had filmed those fire

incidents attributed to terrorists. Some parts of these films were shown in Srinagar and Delhi Doordarshan stations. The remaining films were sold to the terrorists by corrupt television officials for a huge amount. Some smugglers took these films to Pakistan.

Pakistan is not satisfied with its present anti-India tirade, and is continually expanding it. For example, there is the news of its establishing a secret radio station near the Control Line. Its purpose is just to spew poison against India and to transmit messages to the terrorists. Some programs from this radio station were picked up on shortwave radio. These included songs, messages, and appeals to the terrorists and the Kashmiri people. These programs in Kashmiri and Urdu raise such slogans as "Kashmir will become Pakistan, and Ambala will become Khalistan," and detail the "glorious victories" of the terrorists' jihad against Indian security forces. One program went so far as to say that the Indian government had presented a proposal for talks to the Kashmiri terrorists. In this alleged plan, the Indian government was said to go back to the 1953 status. Many programs filled with such false propaganda have been broadcast.

While the Pakistani propaganda machinery is so active on this front, the Indian government and the media are fast asleep. It does not matter how false the propaganda on Pakistani Television is, we cannot deny its influence on the naive Kashmiri people. Pakistani Television and radio are received and heard easily in Kashmir. They also have a large number of programs available. Opposed to it, our radio and television continue their routine. About two years ago, the Ministry for Information and Broadcasting established a special cell within it to provide special coverage for Jammu and Kashmir. It was given the responsibility to plan strategy to counter Pakistani propaganda. However, this cell could not do anything because of bureaucratic obstacles. The biggest problem it is facing is lack of initiative. Neither the government nor the heads of our media empires want to do anything seriously.

The Kashmiri mind has been usually very tolerant of religion; however, the programs they are watching have pushed them toward fundamentalism. This situation is becoming more and more dangerous. The separatism that is being pushed by Pakistan following a well laid out strategy, can be countered by having the support of liberal-minded people. The print media have their limitations in Kashmir. However, electronic media can nullify the effects of this unholy propaganda. Why has the Narasimha Rao government, which appears to be concerned about Kashmir, accepted defeat on this front without even fighting?

Internal Affairs

Nehru Version of Secularism Said Detrimental to Muslims

93AS0674E Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
15 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Masooma Ranalvi: "Wooing Godmen of the Ghettos"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

Nehruvian Secularism Has Protected Not Muslims But Fundamentalists Who Pretend To Be Their Spokesmen

"The moment you hear of an attack on the Babri Masjid, raze every temple of your locality, village or town to the ground"—such was the venom spewed by Maulana Kachauchvi, former Congress member of Parliament and president of the Uttar Pradesh unit of the Babri Masjid Action Committee, at a meeting at Jama Masjid on August 3, 1992.

At that moment an outraged Mr Wasim Ahmed, national secretary of the Janata Dal, jumped on stage and lambasted him in public: "It's people like you who have ruined the community, you ignite the fires and then vanish, leaving the illiterate masses to suffer the brunt. Your rhetoric and actions help the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-Bharatiya Janata Party [RSS-BJP] combine and weaken secular forces."

These opposing views prove the Muslim community is not a monolith but that it is characterised by intense conflict, contradictions and turmoil. In the days to come this conflict can only intensify. Every Muslim will have to take a clear stand. He has to decide whether to rally behind reactionary fundamentalists or strengthen the movement for democracy and against fascism. The latter requires a battle that has to start within the community itself.

Maulana Kachauchvi does not belong to either the Jamaat i Islami or the Islamic Sevak Sangh, but to the Congress. He is the classic example of the Congress's half hearted secularism offered to Muslims over the last 40 years. Diehard ideologues of Nehruvian secularism may term the presence of Maulana Kachauchvi an aberration. But this is untrue. Nurturing of fundamentalists like Kachauchvi is a logical outcome of Nehruvian secularism.

One of the many ideals Nehruvian secularism set out to promote is the "protection of minorities." For many years the Congress had the mandate to translate this ideal into reality. And protect the minorities it certainly did. But just one per cent of them comprising the mullahs, the imams and the syednas. The "secular" Congress state pampered the most rabidly fundamentalist sections of the Muslims community who kept the masses socially backward and tied to *fatwas*, who used the deadly weapons of excommunication and social boycott to keep them in line, who imposed the most reprehensible social laws on women and shackled them, who pushed Muslims into ghettos where they lived in poverty and illiteracy.

The policy to protect fundamentalist Muslims was no accident. It was a conscious policy which can be understood by the fact the Nehru dynasty built "modern" India by savage exploitation. To ensure the exploiter classes reaped the benefits of progress and appropriated

what belonged to the working classes, it was essential the unprivileged were kept as backward and unorganised as possible.

For this reason Nehruvian secularist governments patronised not just the self appointed custodians of Islam, but also similar custodians of Hinduism and other religions.

One offshoot of the ideal of the protection of minorities was preserving their cultural identity. But in the guise of allowing minorities to preserve their culture, fascist outfits like the Jamaat i Islami and dictatorial highpriests like the Syedna were allowed to open and run educational institutions and thus get a stranglehold over the minds of people. They were given full freedom to teach what they liked in *madrassas*, schools and colleges. Government recognition, aid and free and subsidised land was made available.

Thus the Jamaat could refuse to teach science and technology in most *madrassas* and the Syedna could victimise the principal of his school for allowing a skit depicting Hindu life to be staged. The question is what kind of cultural identity has been preserved—the reactionary or the progressive?

The era of Nehruvian secularism saw to it the promotion of cultural identity became the sole preserve of opportunistic the *kedaars* who extracted unaccountable amounts of money from the public to set up so-called charitable trusts. These trusts, enjoying tax concessions and other benefits, controlled charitable institutions like hospitals, hostels, orphanages, *dharamshalas*, community halls and educational institutions. All of which only served to strengthen the hands of fundamentalists who strut about as the godfathers of their communities.

In the name of preserving the identity of minorities, Nehruvian secularism gave free rein to Muslim fundamentalists to formulate and implement an obnoxious set of social laws collectively called the Muslim personal law. Reactionary practices like the unilateral right to divorce for men, child marriage and polygamy which have been considerably reformed and even done away with in several Islamic countries continue to be imposed on Indian Muslims.

In the case of the Bohra community, the Syedna has been given full liberty to throttle Bohras with a rigid code of conduct and dress. He has been allowed to extract Rs [Rupees] 300 million annually from the community as religious taxes. He has been allowed to violate the fundamental constitutional rights to life, liberty, dignity and freedom of expression with impunity. While paying lip service to secularism, fundamentalists like the Syedna run their empires like mini-theocratic states within the Indian state.

True secularism means support to and promotion of progressive elements within all communities. Progressives should be encouraged to run educational institutions where a scientific temper and modern outlook are instilled in the minds of students. Young people must be

taught to question all that is harmful and retrogressive. Secularism means women are freed of their age old chains and helped to stand on their own feet. It means strengthening the fight against chauvinistic values and infusing a spirit of communal amity in the nation.

Nehruvian secularism did precisely the opposite. It sidelined progressive elements in favour of fundamentalists who helped augment the Congress's vote bank by keeping the masses backward. Take the case of Mr Mushirul Hasan, the pro vice chancellor of the Jamia Millia University. He was not only hounded by fundamentalists, even the "secular" government committee humiliated him and forced him to apologise. Similarly, secular Congress governments have turned a deaf ear to the pleas of thousands of Bohra reformists who have been fighting the tyranny of the Syedna.

The Nehruvian policy of protecting minorities has, in practice, meant they have been hounded from all sides. Fundamentalists have hounded Muslims with reprehensible laws, imposed particularly on women, by breeding intolerance and pushing them into ghettos. They have turned young Muslims into victims of lumpen godfathers.

Muslims have been hounded by Hindu fascists who have merely used the rabid rhetoric of Muslim fanatics. In the communal holocausts that result from the hysteria unleashed by Hindu fascists and Muslim fundamentalists, the death toll of ordinary and innocent Muslims is alarmingly high. Last but not the least, Muslims have been hounded by the "secular" state machinery which has increasingly been communalised.

Despite this history of oppression Hindu fascists claim Muslims have been pampered. Muslims are supposed to be pampered. Muslims are supposed to be pampered though an old and helpless Shah Bano could be denied justice. Muslims are supposed to be pampered though it is Muslim, and not Hindu, women who suffer due to a reactionary personal law. They are supposed to be pampered though the overwhelming majority of Muslim children and youths are denied education and jobs. One can imagine what the *sangh parivar* has in store for Muslims when it comes to power, precisely because it does not admit Muslim fundamentalists, and not the community as a whole, have been pampered.

Muslims can fight Hindu fascists by isolating Muslim fundamentalists who merely complement their Hindu counterparts. Hindu fundamentalists need them so as to target the community they claim to represent. Muslims must also join hands with the millions of Hindus who oppose the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP].

Increasing Involvement of Sadhus in Politics Detailed

93AS0684A New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
15 Mar 93 pp 74, 76

[Article by Dilip Awasthi: "Pilgrim's Protest"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Is nothing sacred? The soothing atmosphere of Hardwar and Rishikesh, the aura of their status as seats of Hindu learning and the peacefulness of the ashrams dotting the Ganga have been contaminated by the profanity of politics. Over the past few years, ashrams have come to be known for the political leanings of their sadhus rather than their spiritual guidance. Instead of being full of lofty interpretations of mantras, the speeches of priests and mahants are increasingly full of political messages.

The reaction of Bhimshma Niranjan, a regular visitor, is typical: "You come here for getting as close to nirvana as you can and end up being lectured on today's petty politics." Niranjan used to be a devout follower of one particular priest for over 20 years but ever since the priest became a VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] torch-bearer, Niranjan stopped visiting him: "It is better to just take a quick dip in the Ganga."

Niranjan does not appear to be exaggerating. At least 30 major ashrams and akharas (sects) in Rishikesh and Hardwar have become controversial because of their sadhus' and mahants' political activities during the Ayodhya controversy. The towns are good hunting grounds for recruits to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and VHP. Witness the fact that Rishikesh has thrown up a sadhu-politician, MP [Member of Parliament] Swami Chinmayanand of Parmartha Ashram and Hardwar has produced former MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] Jagdish Muni of Sant Mandal Ashram.

But resistance to the growing politicisation is building up amongst devotees, shocked at the way their spiritual mentors have succumbed to the influence of politicians. Swami Adhyatmanand, a senior priest with the Divine Life Society, a famous school in Rishikesh, says: "Mixing religion and politics could be more dangerous than drinking and driving."

Some prominent sadhus and mahants are responding to the growing BJP influence by building up ties with the Congress(I). An example is Swami Brahm Swaroop, mahant of Jai Ram Ashram, who opened his 500-room ashram for a Congress(I) conference. The swami professes otherwise but local politicians believe he is a likely Congress(I) candidate from Hardwar.

The swami accompanied a delegation of Congress(I) leaders, including Sheila Dixit and Lokpati Tripathi, to the Bara Akhara for a meeting with 200 sadhus last month. When the leaders wanted to know what should be done to win over the sadhus, Girdhar Narain Puri, the mahant of Bara Akhara, confessed: "Jo hamein do

laddoo jyada degaa hum uske saath hain." (We will support whoever gives us the most largesse.)

Many sadhus condemned his remark, but in private. Kamal K. Budkar, an experienced journalist, says: "Such incidents have eroded the following of the religious heads."

The atmosphere is tense as polarisation sets in. For example, Swami Chinmayanand, the mahant of Parmartha Ashram and Swami Chidanand (known as Narain Muni) of Parmartha Niketan, are disciples of the same guru, Swami Dharmanand. But there is rivalry between them as Swami Chinmayanand is a VHP activist while Narain Muni has Congress(I) leanings.

Although the sadhus and mahants are very secretive about their activities, information invariably filters out. When mahants are absent for long periods or when there is a sudden injection of money for the renovation of an ashram, people generally catch on to what is happening.

Some members of the religious fraternity think it is time to fight the way spiritual purpose of the ashrams is being subordinated to political needs. Even a VHP activist like Swami Vidyanand Giri of Kailash Ashram feels constrained to say: "I'm just interested in the construction of the Ram temple. I'm the last man to allow politics to ruin my ashram."

Someone like Giri has an eye on public opinion and is careful not to say anything too triumphant about the demolition of the mosque on December 6 but some anti-BJP religious heads are more outspoken. Swami Adhyatmanand of the Divine Life Society relates how he felt when a colleague called him after the demolition: "She asked me, 'Swamiji what is happening? I don't understand. Lord Ram represents maryada (righteousness). Why are his followers behaving like this?' She left me speechless." Swami Brahm Swaroop was also horrified and is certain about the role politics has played: "Just take politics out of it and the issue will be solved with a flick of the finger."

While it is tough [to] demonstrate with hard facts and figures the impact of the flow of pilgrims to Hardwar and Rishikesh ashrams, information supplied by local travel agents and hoteliers give some indication. The travel agents say that while pilgrim traffic increased by 20 per cent last year, pilgrims preferred to stay in dharamsalas or hotels rather than ashrams. Devendra Bhargava, who is involved in the tourist trade to Hardwar and Rishikesh, says: "There is a lack of interest because the religious heads of such ashrams are either missing most of the time or are reluctant to become involved with devotees who can neither provide monetary nor political support."

Of course, some of the money which comes into ashrams from political sources might be useful for their material upliftment but what some sadhus and pilgrims are asking is: "What about people's spiritual upliftment?" As one pilgrim muttered: "Perhaps we should teach them

Christ's injunction: 'Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.' Unless religion and politics are separated in the ashrams of Hardwar and Rishikesh the backlash against sadhus who dabble in politics could make for a highly unserene atmosphere.

Political Sadhus

CONGRESS(I)

Swami Arjun Puri, Mahamandeleshwar, Tulsi Manas Mandir, Hardwar

Swami Brahm Swaroop, Mahant, Jai Ram Ashram, Hardwar

Swami Girdhar Narain Puri, Mahant, Bara Akhara, Hardwar

Swami Surendra Muni Avdhoot, Mahamandeleshwar, Udaseen Akhara, Hardwar

BJP

Swami Chinmayanad, MP (Badaun), Parmarth Ashram, Rishikesh

Swami Vidyanand Giri, Mahant, Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh

Swami Satya Mitranand Giri, Mahant, Bharat Mata Mandir, Rishikesh

Swami Jagdish Muni, former MLA, Sant Mandal Ashram, Hardwar.

Secularism Has 'Miserably Failed,' New Era Emerging

93AS0674I Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
16 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Pran Nath Luthra: "Towards Ayodhya: Failures of a Faltering Leadership"]

[Text] The renowned French statesman, Tallyrand, had wisely observed: "Surtout, pas de zèle" (above all, beware of zeal). This is what exactly transpired at Ayodhya on December 6 when kar sevaks set out to lay no more than the bare foundations of a Ram Temple. Earlier, on November 30 Mr L. K. Advani had said that the BJP-VHP-RSS [Bharatiya Janata Party-Vishwa Hindu Parishad-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] combine would "respect the rule of law" as against any construction of the temple but that "they could not be blamed if the people's zeal led them to do something of the sort."

Was it a momentary aberration or an uncontrollable urge of a properly planned act? It is difficult to judge, but it certainly resulted from an overpowering zeal to pull down what had remained of the Babri Masjid. The event elicited diverse shades of impressions. Leaders of the Congress(I), Janata Dal and Left parties were

enraged at the anti-secular and illegal action and they were joined by leaders of Muslim political parties and organizations.

Pass the Buck

It is said that if a large section of the Hindus were non-committal and ambivalent, this was only so on the surface. Inside, Hindus were neither enraged nor delighted but stoically considered the happening inevitable after the Government had allowed the problem to linger painfully not for years but for decades. It was a classic demonstration of passing the buck, hoping that time would find a solution. But when the political pressure came and the Government saw the mounting danger to its existence, it acted with the same unsagacious zeal as the kar sevaks had shown.

In sweeping bursts, the Government dismissed the elected BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Governments in four States and banned three Hindu and two Muslim (to keep a balance?) political and religious organizations. The same French statesman, Tallyrand, when under the strain of an official problem had directed his coach driver "Jacques, marche lentement; je suis presse" (Jack, drive slowly, I am under pressure). Not so the helmsman of the Indian ships of state; he saw in his speedy action an expression of his strong, uncompromising and righteous will. In effect, this action helped somewhat to nullify the earlier shock of the demolition of the masjid. It further helped the BJP politically in that it became, in the public eye, an aggrieved victim.

While all this is on an ephemeral level, the true significance of the Ayodhya event has long-term and grave dimensions. It has unlocked the proverbial Hindu-Muslim divide and revived memories of the Partition and even the earlier history of Muslim rule over the land of the Hindus. In fact, the words "Hindu" signifying a people professing the religion of "Hinduism" is a foreign invention unknown to ancient Indian records, scriptures and legends. Hinduism was, in distant times particularly, not a religion but a living philosophy which was cosmic in its vision and open-ended in its scope. Like a limitless Hall of Liberty, it permitted other thoughts to enter it even as it allowed its own concepts to disseminate abroad. Its hallmark was tolerance both at the state and at ecclesiastic levels.

In the fourth century B.C., the Emperor Ashoka left a rock edict which said that all sects should respect each other, should not disparage each other, but should sincerely praise each other. He supported all other religions existing at the time—Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism and the Argivicas, the Shamasas and other sects. This provides an earlier example of secularism encouraged and practised by the state.

Indian civilization has always been known for its liberalism and tolerance whose outstretched friendly arms embraced any element that came to it from outside. It is this virtue that enabled the Greeks, the Sakas, the Huns,

the Parsis and the Jews, pushed out or migrated from faraway alien lands, to find shelter in India.

Having once settled in this country, they became part of the mainstream of India. Not their religion which they freely retained, but their nationality merged with that of the Indian people. This, however, did not happen in the case of the Muslim settlers and rulers in India. "The Muslims not only refused to merge their separate identity in the mainstream of Indian life, but also sought to forcibly change the course of this stream" (Harbans Mukhia in Perspectives on Medieval History).

In building up its case for creating Pakistan, the Muslim leadership stressed the distinctive features of the Muslim people. Chaudri Mohammad Ali says in The Emergence of Pakistan: "Among the various social groups of mankind, it is difficult to imagine a more striking contrast than between Hindu and Muslim social organizations." The Muslim two-nation theorists supported their argument for creating Pakistan with the words "Muslims having ruled India before the advent of the British were entitled to rule at least the Muslim majority areas." The present-day Pakistani believes that "under Mughals, Hindustan completely disappeared and was absorbed by Pakistan" (Khanna and Kumar in Dialogue of the Deaf).

Gandhi's View

Against this, the secular attitude of Mohatma Gandhi, in his words "If India was one nation before the advent of Islam, it must remain one in spite of the change of faith of a large body of her children," were of no avail. Mohammad Ali Jinnah of the Muslim League advanced the theory that religion was the basis for separate nationhood. These bear testimony to the aggressive and separatist role of Islam in the field of politics. This is the primary cause of the Hindu-Muslim divide that has proved unbridgeable.

After the Partition, Nehru realized that to build the Indian nation, it was essential to harness the united energies and potential of all communities. He knew that communalism would be an obstacle in the way of a single and purposeful national collective endeavour to build prosperity in place of the prevailing poverty and want. For this, he chose to lay emphasis on science and technology and rational thought to undo the outlook of religious orthodoxy and fundamentalism that spawned communalism. Despite his best efforts Nehru was, in the last phase of his life, saddened to witness the violent eruptions of communalism between 1961 and 1964. To meet the situation, he formed the National Integration Council.

Secularism has miserably failed because, instead of forging it as an instrument of tolerance, enlightenment and breaking away from superstition and rigid dogma, the political leaders have succumbed to the temptation of exploiting the caste, communal and religious ties for use as voting banks. Thus the leadership has not worked

for a secular-democratic India but for the promotion of partisan communal interests.

New Demands?

Hindus see that the unabated inrush of infiltrators from Bangladesh into Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and, lately, the Union Territory of Delhi, might upset the demographic composition of the land in favour of the Muslims. Among the infiltrators, the cry for a Bangabhoomi has already been raised. This may, in time, well fructify into a demand for another Pakistan. Added to this, the Hindus see the disproportionate rise of the Muslim population (both natural and infiltrated) owing to Muslim polygamy and the marked Muslim indifference to the family planning programmes of the State.

An overview of the country's developments in recent times may be divided into three periods—pre-1947, post-1947, and the post-Ayodhya scene. Each of these three provides a watershed. Prior to 1947, the strenuous endeavours of nationalists and secularists like Gandhi, Nehru, Maulana Azad and Vallabhbhai Patel to retain India's integrity were foiled by Jinnah's Muslim League, resulting in the division of India. In the post-1947 phase, the leadership, even while realizing that religion joined to politics makes for an explosive mixture, encouraged communalism by not banning the politico-religious parties or checking the flow of foreign funds for politico-religious purposes.

The third phase of the post-Ayodhya skirmish is crucial because it is apparent that the country's oneness can be preserved only if the political leadership learns to live up to its words.

Papers Comment on Bombay Terrorist Bombings

Editorial Article Cites Precision

93AS0710A *Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 14 Mar 93 p 1

[Editorial: "High-Tech Terrorism"]

[Text] India has now well and truly become the target of modern terrorism. This is the main lesson to be drawn from the multiple bomb blasts in Bombay on Friday. The country has of course felt the heat of terrorist actions from time to time both in the border states as well as in some areas of the hinterland. But such activity was conducted on what can be described as artisanal lines. A qualitative difference in the terrorist enterprise was in evidence when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. That killing required organisational skills and technological wherewithal of a vastly high order. All the same, the target in Sriperumbudur was an individual. In the case of Bombay it was something else altogether. More than any other metropolis Bombay is a metaphor for modern India. Its cosmopolitanism, its energy, its entrepreneurial skills, its cocky self-confidence, its reputation as a pace-setter in the fields of food and fashion and the arts and letters all taken together vested a potent symbolism

in this city. The word Bombay was a synonym for India's very own idea of progress and modernity. The idea received a jolt during the riots of last December and January. On Friday it received a body blow.

However, there is a marked difference between the veritable pogroms of December and January and the horrific events on Friday. The former was violent all right but it was carried out with primitive instruments and in primitive ways. Part of it was doubtless planned. The planning, however, appeared to be clumsy. Otherwise the riots bore the marks of mindlessness, crude wrath and atavistic passion gone awry. The blasts on Friday betrayed no such thing. To all appearances it was a cool, meticulously thought-out operation. It required an uncommon sense of precision. And its motivation had to be scrupulously impersonal. The target was not a particular individual or institution; it was a trend, a process, an idea. The aim, clearly, was to destabilise India. And what better way is there to achieve such destabilisation than to expose the vulnerability of the country's financial capital? If you are able to create panic, spread mayhem, instil fear and a sense of insecurity in Bombay you have at one stroke managed to keep investments from flowing into the country, disturbed the social peace, whipped up speculation about political stability of the government at the Centre and sapped the will of the people to defend democracy, preserve the secular order and strengthen the nation's economic sinews. The perpetrators of Friday's multiple blasts can be said to have succeeded in their endeavour up to a point. If nothing else, they have proved that the country's intelligence agencies, as well as their lords and masters, failed to anticipate the off-shoots of December-January riots.

This, however, is not the moment for recrimination. The need of the hour clearly is to respond to this high-tech terrorist operation with an elevated degree of maturity. It serves no good purpose to speculate about the identity of those who were responsible for the blasts. Let the professionals do their job first. To point an accusing finger at this or that terrorist or intelligence outfit is to foreclose the country's options. The culprits will have to be swiftly found, tried and punished. If it should be proved that they were instigated from abroad, then measures, diplomatic or otherwise, will have to be devised to retaliate with the requisite amount of pressure or force. In the meanwhile, blame or speculation or buck-passing would be tantamount to tedious, self-serving partisanship.

It requires no special aptitude for clairvoyance to argue that the one and only effective antidote to the Bombay-style, high-tech terrorism is vigilance at all levels in our society. We will have to quickly learn what motives drive the terrorists, what their objectives are, how they operate and who provides them succour, support and encouragement. Obviously such vigilance is not possible in a divided society. Those who planted the devastating bombs in Bombay would not have gone about their business with the nonchalance they demonstrated had

our country not been polarised so sharply along communal lines. Sooner rather than later, we have to mediate anew the grave implications of the destruction of the Babri Masjid on December 6. What is at stake is our very survival as a nation. We cannot ensure this survival if a section of our people feel insecure, frightened and humiliated while another section labours under the impression that the country's culture, ethos and identity are under threat. The country has to move out of this vicious circle where for political gain, fear feeds on trauma, whether real or imagined, and vice versa. Unless politicians and industrialists, farmers and trade unions, academics and opinion-makers, the creative artists and the bureaucracy display a willingness and ability to place patriotism well beyond their individual agenda, Friday's explosions in Bombay could well prove to be no more than a muffled prelude to deadlier times to come.

Assault on Nation

93AS0710B Madras *THE HINDU* in English
15 Mar 93 p 8

[Editorial: "An Assault on the Indian State"]

[Text] The spate of bomb blasts that jolted Bombay on Friday killing at least 300 persons and injuring over 1,000 others represents an assault on the Indian state and has understandably sent shock waves all round. Most of the powerful explosions reported in some dozen places—the sites ranged from highrise commercial complexes and hotels to bus stands and markets—have occurred within a span of two and a half hours, and the one to take the heaviest death toll was the bomb that went off in the Stock Exchange building. Preliminary investigation reports trace the blasts in several cases to parked motor vehicles, although they would not hazard a guess on the trigger device employed. Outrageous as these attacks are, they are qualitatively different in certain respects from the two spells of communal violence the megalopolis witnessed in recent months. For instance, there has been no targeting of a particular religious community now. However, given the sequential occurrence and the spatial distribution of the chosen sites which implies meticulous planning and organisation and the involvement of a large number of terrorists there is a clear case of failure on the part of the intelligence agencies. Obsessed as they are with political intelligence gathering to protect the interests of those in power, the agencies at both the Central and the State levels have been found wanting in areas really critical to the security of the state.

The intensity of the blasts and their impact, the sophisticated nature of the devices used (as seen from the evidence gathered so far) and the modus operandi perceived in general—all these considered, the serial bombing episode is put beyond the pale of ordinary criminal gangs. And the Union Home Minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, was unambiguous on this point in his statement to Parliament. Nor was he hesitant when he spoke of an 'international conspiracy' behind it. The official perception of a foreign hand (or hands)—which is shared

widely by political as well as apolitical opinion of various hues—certainly goes farther than the realm of plausibility. That the communal disquiet following the December 6 outrage in Ayodhya is the sort of opportunity hostile foreign elements would be looking for to exploit in pursuing their sinister objectives was apparent. As a matter of fact, media reports in the post-Ayodhya context did suggest heightened interest and activity of foreign agencies in Maharashtra.

It may be rather premature to establish the identity of the anti-national forces responsible for the blasts. This has to await the unravelling of the plot in all its ramifications, a task which the Centre and the State Government seem to have set about addressing with the utmost seriousness, pursuing all the leads and the motivations for the destabilisation attempt. In the immediate context, some quick initiatives are needed to restore the sense of security in Bombayites which lies badly shattered after the traumatic December-January incidents and the latest chain of explosions. This necessarily calls for quick acting strategy inputs from the Sharad Pawar Government, which had just started on an image-refurbishing exercise when the terrorists struck. And these should include not only law and order responses like deployment of security forces in strength and stern measures against criminal elements but also positive action involving the political leadership at all levels. On the national plane, the imperative is to raise the competence levels of intelligence agencies—this implies also letting them function on professional lines—and to formulate new policies to combat the terrorist menace.

Analyst on Need for Consensus

93AS0710C Madras *THE HINDU* in English
15 Mar 93 p 1

[Article by K.K. Katyal: "Challenge Yes, Response No"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] There is no ambiguity about the challenge—ugly and diabolical—but a matching response is not in sight. The meaning of the series of blasts in Bombay has been correctly grasped—it is seen as directed against the country's stability and not against one community or another—but we do not know how the threat is to be met. Police and investigating authorities, of course, will be on the job—and whether and if so, to what extent, they succeed in unearthing the gory plot is yet to be seen. But is there sufficient awareness of the importance of confronting destabilisers with a united national will?

This is not a plea for a national Government or formal joint fronts of the conventional type, some of which proved unworkable while others failed to take off. It is not a plea either for the Opposition giving up its legitimate role of exposing the acts of omission and commission of the government. The reference is to the need for a consensus on the do's and the don'ts on matters

concerning the country's integrity and for the tailoring of their respective strategies by the various political parties accordingly.

The political scene continues to be messy, with party managers obsessed with plans for confrontation, and considerations of narrow partisan gains having the better of the concern for national interests. Will the Bombay blasts jolt the political elite into giving up its present postures? The message of united will is certain to have a beneficial effect at the administrative level, too. This was established—conversely though—when Bombay was gripped by violence last time. The confusion in the administration, resulting from the absence of an appropriate message from the political bosses, was held responsible for the horrible holocaust. Even a token gesture, like a Parliamentary resolution backed by all the parties, could serve as a demonstration of the national resolve to combat attacks on the country's stability.

There are various theories about the identity of the perpetrators of the crime and it is for the investigating agencies to sift the truth and for the police to take prompt follow-up measures. They will need to be given full support and encouragement. At the same time, effective precautions are called for to ensure that there is no backlash, communal or of any other variety. The initial evidence points the finger of suspicion towards foreign elements, with internal support. The need for thoroughness in investigations was never greater.

In the realm of politics, there is a case for serious introspection on where the recent trends and activities have taken the country. The liberal mixing of religion and politics may have paid handsome dividends to a particular party. But what about the incalculable damage done to the country? The debate on the role of communal organisations in the political arena had been on since the Nehru era and various remedial steps were conceived only to be discarded subsequently. The use of religion in the election campaign is a corrupt practice under the election law and, if proved, leads to the unseating of the winning candidate concerned. However, this is possible through an election petition and a decision takes a long time. There have been one or two instances where a winner was "unseated" after the House to which he belonged had completed its tenure.

Of late, there has been fresh thinking on the need for ensuring that the secular democracy is run with the participation of secular parties only. It started long before the Ayodhya demolition and the riots that followed, but received only perfunctory attention. At the Tirupati Congress(I) plenary in April last year the party president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, dwelt on the subject at some length. What he said then bears repetition.

The Constitution has since defined a political party in the anti-defection law of 1985. This opens up a great opportunity for the Indian polity. It is only logical to expect that a secular democracy should be run with the participation of secular political parties.

"Non-secular parties should have no place in the conduct of a secular democratic State. Any electoral contest between secular and non-secular parties clearly goes against the spirit of the above amendment of the Constitution. Besides, such a contest is neither fair nor healthy. It often involves, in some way or other, an overlay of non-secular propensities on the secular consciousness of the electorate.

"Any election in which an issue tends to range one community against another is an antithesis of secular democracy. There could indeed be disputes between communities, castes, etc., but seeking to resolve them through an election cannot be in the spirit of the Constitution. Surely there should be other methods of resolving such issues. I do not think this requires much argument. The question, however, is how to define a secular party and to determine recognisable criteria to distinguish between a secular political party and a non-secular party.

"A detailed public debate is necessary on all aspects of this issue. It would be entirely reasonable to say that a political party that participates in the secular democratic process must present a secular face, and a secular choice to the electorate. I would therefore urge upon the leaders of public opinion to appreciate the desirability of ensuring the truly secular character of the democratic process in all respects, in the spirit of the Constitution. This, I am sure, will prove beneficial to our secular democracy."

The "detailed public debate," however, did not materialise and the issue was left at that, till it was taken up again by Mr. Rao three days after the Ayodhya vandalism. Talking to a small group of journalists on December 9, 1992, he was specific and cited the case of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] which, invoking the name of Rama, found itself catapulted to power in four States and increased its tally in the Lok Sabha from two to 88. "You cannot have the Rama issue in the electoral battle," was his categorical view. Again, nothing was heard of it till the Prime Minister mentioned the subject in the Lok Sabha last week—committing the Government to early steps to make illegal the use of religion in politics (as was the case with the preaching of secession). What he had in mind was the consolidation of law and amendment of the Constitution and other "special means" to ensure that the "country was perpetually wedded to secularism." This is one case where the proof of the pudding would be in its eating.

The proposal to change the electoral law so as to bar the participation in the poll process of the religion-based parties was one of the items of the action plan, presented by the Human Resource Development Minister to the Congress(I) Working Committee. Why did it become the subject of controversy within the ruling party when it conformed to the thinking of the Prime Minister?

The Bombay incident is another shocking manifestation of terrorism not only taking a heavy toll of innocent lives

but also making a daring attempt to destabilise the polity. The operation of terrorism knows no frontiers and if, as appears on the basis of initial evidence, there is a nexus between the domestic terrorist with the outfits abroad, this menace deserves international response. Today, it is India which is at the receiving end, tomorrow it could be some other nation. As the blast at the World Trade Centre in New York showed, even the mightiest of nations could not be immune from such dangers. This should give a new urgency to the fight against the challenge of terrorism.

The New York blast triggered an intense media debate on the vulnerability of the U.S. to the new wave of terrorism. THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE discussed the issue with the head of a private research agency in Washington, National Strategic Information Centre. Asked what would the U.S. do now and what was the long-term significance of the incident, he replied: 'We often react strongly to an incident, then forget it quickly unless there are recurrences, beyond the almost inevitable copycat incidents. What is important as a trend, in my view, is the new risk of terrorist violence that reflects a worldwide breakdown of the ability of States, including liberal democracies, to provide for the needs of people. The consequence could be a rise in ethnic, religious and urban violence as individuals turn to gangs of their own kind because they are unable to enter the system.'

"Until now, the Americans—with faith in our own system—have tended to ignore the rise of this kind of new, post-cold war violence around the world, or at least think that it was never going to happen here. Now I think that we're going to have to pay more attention to global trends—notably, the fact that we have large, unassimilated communities of the sort that have been the basis for terrorism in the past in Europe."

Analyst Says Rao Gaining Strength in Congress(I)

93AS0704A Madras THE HINDU in English 4 Mar 93
p 1

[Article by K.K. Katyal]

[Text] New Delhi, March 3—In the Congress(I) set-up, the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, emerges stronger out of l'affaire Maharashtra, as it took a stunning turn with the return of the Defence Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, to the politics of his home-State. The potential for power struggle at the Centre has weakened considerably.

Twenty months ago, Mr. Pawar was a serious contender for the post of Prime Minister as against Mr. Narasimha Rao. Unlike another aspirant, the Human Resources Development Minister, Mr. Arjun Singh, Mr. Pawar threw his hat in the ring but was not lucky. The Congress(I) Parliamentary Party overwhelmingly supported Mr. Rao and Mr. Pawar was inducted into the Central Cabinet with an important portfolio. He made his debut

in the Central politics in the manner of his mentor, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, who was appointed Defence Minister in the Nehru Cabinet, to succeed Mr. Krishan Menon.

Since June 1991, when the Congress(I) assumed office, there was no occasion for a serious challenge, within the party, to Mr. Rao's leadership. However, Mr. Pawar and Mr. Arjun Singh were seen as the most important figures next to the Prime Minister and as potential successors to the top post. For a while, it was a case of troika, with Mr. Rao ahead of the other two. This was evident, apart from other occasions, at Tirupati last year in the elections to the Congress(I) Working Committee—the first after nearly two decades—when both Mr. Arjun Singh and Mr. Pawar—in that order—received an impressive measure of support of the AICC [All India Congress Committee] members. Then followed another curious turn, and their status was changed to that of nominated members. But that is a different story.

Arjun Singh's line: Thereafter, Mr. Arjun Singh continued to hit the headlines because of his advocacy of a tougher line in dealing with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]—and, as such, was perceived as a rival rallying figure. The impression was strengthened because of several other happenings. That, however, was not the case with Mr. Pawar who was seen as having reconciled himself to a secondary role. Occasionally, there were reports of Mr. Pawar and Mr. Arjun Singh coordinating their strategies and pooling their strength, but most of it remained in the realm of speculation.

It will be difficult to resist the temptation of interpreting Mr. Pawar's return to Maharashtra as a significant indicator—that he had lost out in the game at the Centre. There is another theory—crediting Mr. Pawar with a high degree of pragmatism for having decided to take charge of Maharashtra where his support was sought to be subverted by his erstwhile followers. With his home-State slipping out of his control, could he ever achieve his ambition at the Centre?

The Maharashtra Congress(I) crisis recently got mixed with Central politics. That was when a beleaguered Mr. Sudhakarrao Naik mobilised the support of his fellow Chief Ministers in favor of Mr. Rao, in the face of the demand that the Prime Minister give up the party presidentship.

Miscalculation: This, Mr. Naik thought, would guarantee Mr. Rao's support to him against the onslaughts of Mr. Pawar's camp. Later when Mr. Naik came out with a public call for the removal of Mr. Pawar from the Cabinet, the outgoing Chief Minister was generally seen as having acted in the belief that his stand would not be disliked by the "high command." That turned out a serious miscalculation.

The tenor of Mr. Rao's message—and the sequence of events today—helped to project him as the supreme boss. He succeeded in persuading a reluctant Mr. Pawar

to take charge of Maharashtra and help save the party citadel which it could not afford to lose at the present crucial juncture.

The demonstration of supremacy, in the party does not, however, mean that he gets the better of the challenges facing him in the country.

Rao Asked To Explain Son's Involvement in Scam
93AS0708A Madras THE HINDU in English 3 Mar 93 p 4

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Hyderabad, March 2—The Telugu Desam today demanded an explanation from the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, on the alleged involvement of his son, Mr. P.V. Prabhakar Rao, in the stock scam.

Addressing a press conference here, four legislators, including the TDP [Telugu Desam Party] general secretaries, Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu and Mr. A. Madhava Reddy, referred to reports in an English daily and said the involvement of the Prime Minister's family in the scam was now established.

"The Prime Minister owes an explanation to the nation in the wake of reports that a company, of which his son is a major promoter, received Rs [Rupees] 2 crores from the stock broker, Mr. Hitendra P. Dalal.

Mr. Naidu said it was clear Goldstar Steels and Alloys-Limited, promoted by Mr. Prabhakar Rao and others, had received Rs. 2 crores in April last year from Mr. Hitendra P. Dalal through the Andhra Bank Financial Services Limited. The Joint Parliamentary Committee [JPC], probing the scam, had identified Mr. Dalal as a major player in the biggest ever financial fraud in the country, and frozen his accounts. It was a "clear deal" between the Prime Minister's son and the blacklisted stock broker.

The TDP general secretary said Mr. P. Chidambaram had to quit the ministerial position on the charge that he was involved in the scam, having invested Rs. 2 lakhs in shares. Now that the involvement of Mr. Rao's son had come to light, the Prime Minister had a moral responsibility to clear himself of suspicion.

Asked whether they would demand Mr. Rao's resignation, the TDP leaders said they would await an explanation from him before deciding on the next step.

Reference expunged: The controversy figured in the Assembly also, but the Speaker, Mr. D. Sripada Rao, amidst heated exchanges, expunged all references to the Prime Minister and his son.

The issue was raised during zero hour by Mr. M. Raghuma Reddy (TDP), who referred to the newspaper report. The Speaker firmly prevented Mr. Reddy from making further reference on the basis of press reports. He said the member's speech would not go on record.

The TDP deputy leader, Mr. K. Vidyadhara Rao, picking up the thread, demanded a white paper on the huge investments allegedly made by the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological Authority, the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority, the A.P. Scheduled Caste Finance Corporation and other public sector undertakings in the Fairgrowth Financial Services which he described as a 'scam-related institution.'

Intervening, the Chief Minister, Mr. K. Vijayabhaskara Reddy, objected to members raising matters on the basis of newspaper reports. He pointed out that the JPC was already investigating the scam and its report must be awaited before coming to any conclusion. He questioned the propriety of the TDP members speaking about persons not present in the House.

The Finance Minister, Mr. K. Rosaiah, said the House could not discuss every report appearing in newspapers. For instance, recently there was a damaging report about the Leader of Opposition, Mr. N.T. Rama Rao's actorson. These things should not be discussed in the House.

Following an objection raised by Mr. Vidyadhara Rao, the Speaker expunged the references to the son of Mr. Rama Rao as well as the Prime Minister and his son.

Congress (I) Seen Losing Ground at State, National Levels

Madhya Pradesh Unit Fractured

93AS0671A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English 5 Mar 93 p 10

[Article by Sujay Gupta: "Madhya Pradesh Congress (I) Ridden With Rifts"]

[Text] Bhopal, March 4—The fighting within the Congress(I) ranks at the Centre, with senior Cabinet Ministers from Madhya Pradesh playing a key role, has had an adverse effect on the programmes and policies chalked out by the State Congress(I) Committee for tackling the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party].

According to senior party sources, the opportunity that the Congress(I) had, after the dismissal of the BJP Government, to consolidate its position and highlight the failures of the BJP, has been frittered away by the continuous infighting among the leaders of the Centre leading to an inevitable fallout in Madhya Pradesh, since both Mr Arjun Singh and Mr V.C. Shukla belong to the State.

The initial promise that there would be a closing of ranks among senior leaders, to fight the BJP unitedly in the forthcoming elections, seems to have fizzled out. Moreover, the detailed action plan formulated by the Pradesh Congress(I) Committee has not been implemented. As a senior working committee member, who preferred anonymity, said, "All we have had in these two months is Central Ministers making whirlwind tours of the State

and taking pot shots at each other. Very little work has been done or even attempted at the grassroots level."

The PCC(I)'s [Pradesh Congress Committee] action plan was based entirely on the action plan chalked out by the CWC(I) [Congress Working Group] at its extended Working Committee meeting in December 1992. The main thrust of that action plan was to send active members right down to the village level to educate the masses on the policies of the Centre. All blocks and district committees were asked to hold block and district level meetings at least twice a month and send detailed reports to the PCC(I).

But, according to sources, there has been no monitoring till date to check if these meetings were held. Nor have there been attempts to collect the reports.

Other important features of the action plan that were promised to be implemented, included concentrating on the opening of relief work and distribution of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana funds in drought-hit areas, organizing seminars at divisional headquarters all over the State on topics such as Article 370, uniform civil code, economic policies of the Congress(I) and the unemployment problem in the State and holding meetings of "tendu patta" pluckers and "bidi" labours who have been denied their rights.

But two months after these plans were formulated, there are no indications yet that they will ever be implemented. The State is facing a severe drought and drinking water problem, especially in the Chattisgarh areas and a lack of funds coupled with bad planning has made a mockery of development activities.

Yet the State Congress(I), that had announced in its action plan that a Statewide agitation would be started to ensure the launching of adequate relief work and JRY funds distribution, remains unmoved even as reports of starvation deaths reach the capital. The "tendu patta" and "bidi" labourers are in no mood to attend meetings and conferences till their outstanding debts are cleared, and not one of the much-talked about seminars and symposiums to highlight the "Fascist tendencies of the BJP" has been held.

The State Congress(I) is facing a fund crunch and even allocated amounts earmarked for the districts and blocks are not given, according to a party source.

Political observers in the State capital, as well as Congressmen, say that unless the bickerings among senior Cabinet members belonging to the State stop, the workers will be in no mood to implement policies.

Fading in Maharashtra, Tripura

93AS0671B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
8 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Nikhil Chakravarty: "Holding the Battered Forts"]

[Text] Before the excitement over the aborted Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] rally and the budget could die down, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao dropped the bombshell of sending Mr Sharad Pawar back to Maharashtra as chief minister. A fortnight was spent on speculations on Mr Sudhakarrao Naik's successor after his ignominious incompetence in handling the Bombay riots. But few could have anticipated the decision to move Mr Pawar back to his home state.

As both Congress president and the prime minister, Mr Narasimha Rao can convincingly defend his choice. Bombay is the centre of commerce and the financial capital of the nation. The two rounds of communal riots in December and January extracted a heavy price, apart from upsetting powerful giants of the corporate sector. The danger is not yet over as the Shiv Sena rampage continues and the large-scale exodus of non-Maharashtrians from Bombay could cripple the city's economy as well as efface its cosmopolitan character.

It was Mr Pawar himself who exposed the failure of the Naik government to deal with the communal crisis. And who knows Bombay better than Mr Pawar himself?

The weeks of behind the scenes moves and counter-moves were in keeping with Congress tradition. The Pawar group would not accept anybody from Mr Naik's camp while the latter could not back anyone acceptable to the former. Mr Pawar himself would have preferred to stay on at the Centre holding the important portfolio of defence and rule Maharashtra through a proxy chief minister. This was scotched by the prime minister offering to send the home minister, Mr S.B. Chavan, to Maharashtra as chief minister. Mr Chavan's presence in Bombay would mean the mobilisation of all anti-Pawar forces in the state. This could be averted only by Mr Pawar agreeing to become chief minister himself.

The Congress leadership has therefore reached a stage it has to export ministers from the Centre to hold the party's fast dwindling forts in the states. First Mr Vijaybhaskar Reddy had to go to Andhra Pradesh and now Mr Pawar to Maharashtra. This indicates one facet of the crisis the Congress is facing: the woeful shortage of competent manpower.

At the Centre itself the party does not have a majority in Lok Sabha. This means the Congress has to mobilise its talents to the maximum and cannot afford to be complacent about its functioning. The depletion of its influence at the state level is a matter of concern. Whether or not the decision to make Mr Pawar chief minister was correct, the Congress had no option but to despatch a heavyweight from the Centre to retain its badly battered fort in Maharashtra.

Mr Pawar is reported to have said he would like to return to the Centre after he has "restored normalcy in Maharashtra" and seen to it "the Congress emerges victorious in the general election." This shows he has a perspective

which very few cabinet members can honestly claim to have. A day labourer's outlook seems to be more prevalent.

It is however difficult to predict when he will return to the Centre. For one thing, no one knows when the next general election will be held. It will certainly not be held in the near future if Mr Narasimha Rao has his way. And no Congress leader with a sense of reality can predict with certainty the Congress will return to power after the next election.

Mr Narasimha Rao may have outwitted Mr Pawar in this round, but that does not mean he has ceased to be a factor in Congress politics at the Centre. Without the active support of the MPs [Member of Parliament] on Mr Pawar's side the Congress can hardly expect to continue as the ruling establishment at the Centre.

For the time being the crisis in Maharashtra has been managed. It does not follow however the prime minister will have a peaceful time at the Centre. In the very week he was finalising matters related to Maharashtra's chief ministership, a newspaper item linked the notorious stock exchange broker, Mr Harshad Mehta, with Mr Prabhakar Rao, one of the sons of the prime minister, via the Andhra Bank Financial Services Ltd. What is amazing is the treasury benches tried to hush the matter up on the excuse the government could not act on the basis of a newspaper report.

It may be recalled the prime minister himself committed last year that nobody, not even those related to him, would be shielded. The easiest thing for the government to have done was say the joint parliamentary committee would examine the case. While the officers' union of the Andhra Bank has refuted the allegation against the prime minister's son, it was the government which dragged its feet about tackling the question in Parliament. In the bargain, the prime minister was under the cloud of infamy for four long days, another proof of the Congress leadership is missing the pulse of the public.

The sordid handling of the Tripura case also demonstrated the extent the Congress is jittery today. That the Congress is unsure about its future in Tripura and feared it would not be able to retain its hold on the state in a free and fair election was known for quite some time. This stirred the high profile Central minister in charge of the Congress in Tripura into action. He was reported to have held a meeting with some election officers of the state in which the Congress's prospects and preparations for the coming polls were discussed.

When the chief election commissioner, Mr T.N. Seshan, was informed of this, he immediately ordered the removal of the concerned officers from election duty and put off the poll. In the bargain, Mr Santosh Mohan Dev's conduct was exposed to censure. Meanwhile the term of the Tripura assembly expired. Normally president's rule ought to have been imposed till the election. This has not been done. Instead, the Congress ministry continues to remain in the state as a caretaker government.

These issues were handled in such a manner by the government when they came up in Parliament it became obvious the Congress wished to cling to office by any means so it could "manage" the poll for itself.

What is worth noting is the Congress leadership seems so desperate to avoid defeat in Tripura it can adopt manipulations of the Santosh Mohan Dev kind. The spectre of losing in Tripura is staring the Congress in the face. If Tripura is lost it will be a big blow to a party already being pushed out of office in so many states. Instead of adopting the straight and honourable course of allowing free and fair elections under president's rule in the state, the Congress, by frantically trying to avert the humiliation of defeat, is further eroding its credibility before the public.

Experiencing Political Paralysis

93AS0671C New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
28 Feb 93 pp 46-48

[Article by Dilip Awasthi and N.K. Singh: "Governors' Rule: Blowing a Chance"]

[Text] The Congress(I) is wasting the kind of chance most political parties would die for. It has been two months since the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] governments were dismissed and Governor's rule imposed in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the party still has nothing to show for it.

These are three states in which the electorate was becoming increasingly disillusioned with a party which had failed to live up to its election promises of being radically different from its Congress(I) predecessors in providing a clean, honest and united administration. The varying degrees of corruption and infighting in all three states had begun to erode the credibility of the BJP governments. When the Centre dismissed them, the Congress(I) was jubilant at finally being able to exploit the BJP's low popularity ratings and prepare the ground for eventual victory in state elections by launching development plans, providing efficient rule and placing reliable officials in senior posts to contain the outbreaks of communal violence which were being associated with BJP rule.

But Congress(I) party leaders are so bogged down in their internal bickerings that they have had little time left over for the business of providing good government. All three states are caught in a web of administrative uncertainty. Moreover, with Congressmen completely unable to wrest the initiative from the BJP and mobilise public opinion against it, the party is sinking only deeper into its torpor. The task of the governors in each state has not been made any easier by the persistent squabbles and indecision which have marked the party. Its failure to seize a heaven-sent opportunity and use it to its own advantage has been so great that, when it is time to cast their vote in state elections, voters might even decide that perhaps BJP misrule was not so bad at all in comparison with what the Congress(I) is supplying.

And all this while the BJP has been growing in strength, particularly at the grassroots level, helped not just by its Hindutva message but also the ineptitude of a party which is unable to take on the challenge which its principal rival represents.

Uttar Pradesh

Total Torpor

The BJP Men Rule the Roost

Affairs in the state have been marked by an almost total paralysis of political will, leaving the state administration confused and floundering. The inactivity has been exacerbated by the fact that Governor B. Satyanarayan Reddy's political future remains uncertain. The Congress(I)'s behaviour has been so lethargic that it has not even bothered to change the BJP administration which was tailored to suit the regime's ideological needs. Of the 600 IAS [Indian Administrative Service] and IPS [Indian Police Service] officials transferred by the BJP during its 15-month rule, most remain unchanged. Says O.P. Jindal, a former MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] from Agra: "Most officials had been handpicked by the BJP leaders. They are still loyal to them but nobody is bothered enough to change them."

Which is not to say that Congress leaders have made no attempt at change. Senior bureaucrats are snowed under with long lists of recommendations for transfers of officials by the state Congress leaders. There are about 300 transfer recommendations awaiting a decision—among them being UPCC(I) [Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee] chief Mahavir Prasad's list of 50 and former Congress Legislative Party leader Pramod Tewari's 42 'cases'. It was only last fortnight that the Congress(I) announced the setting up of a committee to overlook administrative issues in Uttar Pradesh. Headed by Union Minister Pranab Mukherjee, it includes Union Minister of State for Mines Balram Singh Yadav, political secretary to the prime minister Jitendra Prasad, Rajya Sabha member Sibte Razi, AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] General Secretary Nawal Kishore Sharma, UPCC(I) chief Mahavir Prasad, N.D. Tiwari, and Pramod Tewari.

Given the snail's pace at which the administration moves, even routine transfers have been put on hold. The Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) recommended the promotion of 12 IAS officials of the 1967 batch and 23 official of the 1977 batch on January 5. The file is still shuttling between the advisers' office and the Raj Bhavan with a decision nowhere in sight.

If, in certain cases, a decision has been taken, it has only ended up creating a controversy. Of the 20 IAS and IPS officials transferred in December, half a dozen were removed only because of the Ayodhya aftermath. These include chief secretary V.K. Saxena, home secretary Prabhat Kumar and DGP S.V.M. Tripathi. Then, principal secretary (Finance) B.N. Tewari, who was tipped to become industrial development commissioner, suffered

a demotion of sorts by being appointed principal secretary (Industry). Apparently, Tewari protested to the new Chief Secretary T.S.R. Subramanium. But with Subramanium's position already shaky, he is hardly in a position to take any kind of action.

Subramanium's choice as the chief secretary has not gone down well with the Scheduled Caste lobby. It is sore that Agriculture Production Commissioner Ramesh Chandra, who belongs to the Scheduled Caste, has been ignored. With the Brahmin and Scheduled Caste lobbies bickering, the future seems grim.

There are reasons for the bureaucracy's apathy. Many officials are far too timid to stick their necks out by taking a controversial decision. Others are convinced that Kalyan Singh will be back in power soon and so are willing to turn a blind eye to the BJP's actions. The administration has been adopting a 'keep an eye on the future' attitude in riot-torn Kanpur and Varanasi. Former Congress(I) minister Ram Awatar Dixit claims: "Most of the BJP rioters have gone scot-free as the lower level of the administration is sympathetic towards them."

Dixit's claims are not far-fetched. What lends credence to his allegations is the fact that it was possible for former chief minister Kalyan Singh to address half-a-dozen public meetings in and around Ayodhya on January 29, despite the ban on his public meetings.

The most astounding example of the bureaucracy's inertia was the way it handled—or rather didn't handle—the Lucknow hijacking incident of January 22. With the exception of the initiative shown by two local officials, the senior officials were ridiculously indifferent. Most of them sat at home through the crucial hours. And neither the Governor nor his advisers had any advice at all for the administration.

There are abundant examples of bureaucratic delay. It took two months and about half-a-dozen newspaper reports before Kalyan Singh was stripped of his bullet-proof cars. The cars were needed for the prime minister's visit to Mau but could not be made available since the formal order was passed only on the day Narasimha Rao was in Mau.

The Congress(I) seems to have landed itself in a no-win situation. Whenever it takes a decision, it ends up with a controversy on its hands. And if it doesn't, matters slip further out of its control.

Rajasthan

Reddy's Rule

Fighting the Wrong Enemy

In Rajasthan too, the Congress(I) is lagging far behind the BJP in mobilising public opinion even though the entire state machinery is at its disposal. While BJP

leaders are touring the state, Congress(I) leaders are wasting their energy fighting the strong-headed Governor, M. Chenna Reddy.

To the Congress(I)'s chagrin, an independent Reddy does not even accept the advice of party leaders on the postings of favourite officials. Although Reddy has already reshuffled senior IAS officials four times in one-and-a-half months in an effort to remove men whom he thought were close to the BJP regime, he says that does not necessarily mean that "I will replace them with Congressmen." In the latest reshuffle, the home commissioner, Arun Kumar, was banished to the Rajasthan Civil Services Appellate Tribunal.

Not surprisingly, relations between Congress leaders and the Governor are tense. This forced the party to issue a statement clarifying that it was "satisfied" with Reddy's performance during President's rule.

Any time that Congressmen have to spare after their battle with the Governor, they spend in fighting amongst themselves. The rival groups of former chief minister Harideo Joshi and the PCC(I) chief, Parasram Maderana, are locked in a battle of strength, with an eye on the next elections. Last fortnight, the Jaipur city unit of the party held two parallel meetings displaying a lack of unity even though they know that state elections will probably be held within a year. Like a sulking child, Joshi complained to the prime minister that Maderana's group did not allow him to speak at a party meeting at Jaipur. Earlier Joshi and Maderana had come into conflict over the ouster of Rajasthan Youth Congress(I) chief Raghu Sahram.

What is worse for the party's health is the dissatisfaction amongst the Congress(I) ranks with the reshuffle in the Union ministry. For the first time in Rajasthan, senior Congress leaders are questioning P.V. Narasimha Rao's leadership and wisdom.

Meanwhile, the BJP has gone to the masses, armed with the Ram card. Last fortnight it launched its mass mobilisation campaign by sending its senior leaders to the districts. The campaign to collect one crore signatures (out of a total population of 2.40 crore) in the state to demand the Ram temple at the disputed site is also in full swing. Dismissed chief minister, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat said: "The war has started and Delhi is our aim."

Besides the Congress(I), most of the other non-BJP parties, including the four factions of the Janata Dal and the two communist parties, are in such a minuscule minority in the state that they do not matter politically. They could, though, have started a psychological campaign against the BJP but the Congress leaders appear not to be bothered.

Madhya Pradesh

A Divided House

Absence of Policy Creates Inertia

President's rule in Madhya Pradesh has become a byword for bureaucratic bungling, by remote control. With the Congress(I) torn apart by factions and the Governor, Kunwar Mehmood Ali Khan, playing a partisan role, the administration is in a shambles. And the beneficiary is the BJP.

New Delhi has not been of much help. For about 10 days last month, the state administration came to a grinding halt as the Centre was unable to take a decision on the Governor's order to change the chief secretary, Nirmala Buch, and the director-general of police, D.K. Arya. While the bureaucracy ignored Khan's order, one of his advisers, Brahma Swaroop, even issued a statement asserting that the chief secretary and the DGP [Director General of Police] had not been changed. Khan retaliated by stripping Swaroop of the Home and General Administration Departments. It was only when Khan threatened to resign that New Delhi directed the bureaucracy to carry out his orders. And N.S. Sethi became chief secretary and R.P. Sharma the new police chief.

Uncertainty among bureaucrats has also increased because the Congress(I) factions are unable to agree on a common list of transfers. For example, although about 50 IAS [Indian Administrative Service] and IPS [Indian Police Service] officers have been transferred already, the list is not final. Officials including Additional Chief Secretary, Home, S. Satyam, are treading on eggshells, wondering what the future has in store for them.

Their trepidation is justified. Especially after S.R. Mohanty, deputy secretary in Bhopal, was shuttled from place to place to pander to the whims of politicians. Mohanty was first transferred to Gwalior as district collector. But since Madhavrao Scindia wanted someone else, the posting was cancelled and Mohanty was transferred to Durg. Then, because Motilal Vora was not keen on his Durg posting, Mohanty was packed off to Bhopal again.

Although the party is trying to regain lost ground by starting a campaign to highlight the BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] communal politics, its internal wrangles nullify all such efforts. Some of them are carrying their differences to ridiculous—and highly wasteful—lengths. Last fortnight Arjun Singh, Kamal Nath and Madhavrao Scindia chartered three separate planes for the same party meeting in Bhopal. And then returned to Delhi the same day—again in separate aircraft.

Meanwhile, it is the BJP which has emerged a winner on the strength of its Ram card. Unless Congress(I) leaders can work effectively to counter the BJP, Governor's rule in Madhya Pradesh could end up being a totally futile phase in the party's history.

POLITICAL

Party Fading Fast

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[Text] The Congress(I) today has its back to the wall. That is perhaps the reason why it cannot see the writing on it. That single act of destruction by the kar sevaks in Ayodhya, however reprehensible, enhanced the BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] appeal with many Hindus across the country. The dismissal of the four BJP state governments and a crackdown on the Sangh brotherhood has also misfired—it only gave the BJP something more to shout about. The Muslims, traditionally Congress(I) supporters, now blame the Rao Government for failing to protect the Babri Masjid. As a result, the Congress(I)'s position in the north and the west, where the BJP already has a significant presence, has worsened further. Its southern citadel too is under attack. In the absence of a clear strategy to fight the BJP, the party is in danger of failing to recover lost ground.

The Hindu Belt: In the Doldrums

This is where the Congress(I) is hit the hardest. The BJP is already a force to reckon with here—its four dismissed governments belonged to this region. With Ayodhya overshadowing all other issues, the party is sure to exploit it to its advantage. And this at a time when the secular image of the Congress(I) is in doubt.

In Uttar Pradesh, however, in the heat of the moment, the predominant emotion among Congressmen is glee. Conveniently forgetting the fact that the party only managed 17.7 per cent of the votes in the last assembly elections against 32.3 per cent by the BJP and 19.5 per cent by the Janata Dal, its members inexplicably look towards the period of President's rule to vault them back into power. Senior leaders are already dreaming of power and its pleasures. UPCC(I) [Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee] chief Mahavir Prasad was overheard telling a group of supporters, with just a hint of presumption: "I get so tired attending to visitors these days that I fear the prospect of becoming chief minister."

In a state hopelessly riven by the communal divide, the Congress(I) will need a strong strategy rather than just its fervent hope of presenting itself as the only party which can quell the hysteria sparked off by the BJP. Its aim is to divert the state's attention from religion to development by providing an efficient state administration. Says former chief minister N.D. Tiwari: "We have to get our act together and give the state what recent governments could not." An admirable aim—if only it weren't for the utter confusion in the party on how to handle the BJP.

In Madhya Pradesh, however, the mood in the state Congress(I) unit seems to be more purposeful. The various factions have set aside their rivalries to take on the BJP. As S.C. Shukla declared: "The first task is to fight the BJP. We can sort out our differences later."

But the party will still face an uphill task whenever the elections are called. Though it earned some goodwill

among the public for its relief work during the communal carnage in Bhopal, it has to contend with the Muslim community's suspicion because of the way it softpedalled the demolition initially. To add to its woes, many Hindus are against its stated policy of rebuilding the mosque. As a result, the state unit is confused on the stand it should take on the issue. The BJP, on the other hand, has a clear strategy in the wake of the ban on the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad], and the dismissal of its government.

Congress(I) leaders do not want to be identified with the President's rule either. As MPCC(I) [Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee] President Digvijay Singh says: "Instead of blaming the BJP for two-and-a-half years of misrule, the people may blame us." Keeping this in mind the party is pushing for an early poll in the state.

One reason for optimism among the leaders is that the BJP may not be able to exploit the communal polarisation in the state as it is the sharpest in areas which are already BJP strongholds. Yet, this time, the Congress(I) may find that unity in the party alone might not deliver the goods.

In Rajasthan, the party's eye is not even on defeating the BJP. When the BJP was launching its offensive against the Centre, the state PCC(I) [Pradesh Congress Committee] chief Parasram Madarena and former chief minister Harideo Joshi were locked in combat. Instead of the BJP, many Congressmen prefer to target the maverick Governor M. Chenna Reddy who in turn keeps his own counsel. "The Congressmen want me to remove the BJP politicians from many posts. I shall do that. But they also want Congressmen to replace them. I shall not do that," he declared.

At present, the only thing holding the fractious party together is the belief that communal polarisation is not prominent in rural areas, and a consensus on supporting Prime Minister Rao. This despite the suspicion in the party that Rao's crackdown on the Sangh brotherhood will not help the party politically.

In Bihar, there is barely a trace left of the secular credentials of the Congress(I). Compounding its sorry state is the sudden—if temporary—saffron wave in the state. The BJP has gained an edge with the banning of the RSS and the VHP and the announcement that the mosque will be rebuilt. But perhaps the biggest winner is Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav. By keeping communal passions in check, he has fortified his secular image.

Watching his triumph is a hopelessly divided Congress(I). The Ayodhya events have created deep fissures. The state leadership has been sharply critical of Rao over his hamhanded handling of the Ayodhya issue. While some admitted that Rao had few options, they felt that his faith in the BJP showed poor political judgment. But as PCC(I) President M. Hidayatullah Khan said, the past mistakes should not be exacerbated by further slackness

over the construction of both the mosque and the temple. "The Centre must initiate some positive steps in this direction to restore the confidence of the people."

AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] spokesman V.N. Gadgil's statement that Rao had the support of Laloo in remaining prime minister has only added to the confusion in the Congress(I) ranks in the state. Although Laloo dismissed Gadgil's words as "absurd," Congress(I) leaders are apprehensive that the chief minister may extend his influence to their party.

The West: Eroded Base

Gujarat and Maharashtra are both communally sensitive states. And though they lived up to their reputation in the aftermath of Ayodhya, the Congress(I) finds itself in varying situations in the two states.

Get the January 24 polls to the five municipal corporations postponed by at least six months. Or else the party is doomed," implored Congressmen to the AICC(I) team that visited Gujarat in the wake of one of the worst communal riots in the state. The plea showed up the party's feeling of utter helplessness at stopping the BJP reaping the Ayodhya harvest.

The balance has shifted quite suddenly. Till November 1992, Chief Minister Chimanbhai Patel looked unassailable because the BJP was faction-ridden. But the ban on the RSS and the Centre's proposal to rebuild the mosque has given the BJP new ammunition.

It has exploited the issue skilfully, armed with new archaeological evidence found in the mosque debris. A Congress(I) worker conceded: "Even if the prime minister were to cap all the temple tops in Gujarat with gold, Hindus won't oblige him." The Hindus have also been hurt by the arrest of the state VHP chief, Professor K.K. Shastri, a respected Sanskrit scholar in his 80s.

Unfortunately for the Congress(I), the riots have alienated the main victims: the Muslims and the Dalits. In Ahmedabad and Surat, the Dalits were targeted by the Muslims. But the AICC(I) team ignored the Dalits and concentrated on the Muslim victims. This gave a golden opportunity to the BJP to woo the Dalits. The Muslims are, however, expected to stay with the Congress(I) in the absence of any secular alternative.

Chimanbhai's appointment of a commission under a retired high court judge, I.C. Bhatt, to probe the riots and police excesses is a device to buy time. It will spare him the responsibility of taking immediate action against the guilty. But with the populace polarised along communal lines, he needs more than that to keep the BJP at bay.

The Congress(I) in Maharashtra too is worried. But certainly not woebegone. Soon the furious post-demolition riots in the state, the fate of the Sudhakarrao Naik ministry hung in a balance. Worried about the long-term impact of the demolition and the bloody

aftermath, the state Government got down to some quick political damage control.

Realising that the political fates of both Naik and MPCC(I) chief Shivajirao Deshmukh are tied to their ally Rao, the high command rushed Ghulam Nabi Azad and other leaders to Bombay. To assure sceptics that the Congress(I) was in control, Azad declared: "We have full confidence in Naik. There's no need for him to step down." Though Pawar made a veiled reference about the administration's failure in controlling violence, he played down the issue.

With party leaders putting up a united front in the face of a crisis, Maharashtra is in no danger of falling as a Congress(I) bastion. Besides, the Opposition in the state does not pose much of a threat to it. The Janata Dal lacks both organisation and effective grassroots leaders. As for the BJP, it isn't a particularly powerful organisation, depending as it does on former alliance partner, the Shiv Sena. Post-Ayodhya, saffron-than-thou Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray has moved back into the BJP embrace.

The South: Cracks in the Citadel

Though traditionally a Congress(I) bastion, the BJP is making significant inroads in the southern states. And despite the fact that Ayodhya has not had a strong impact in the region, the Congress(I) will have to shrug off its complacency to thwart the BJP's rise.

All's not well on Rao's home front. Congress(I) leaders and MLAs [Member of Legislative Assembly] in Andhra Pradesh fear a fall in popular support following the Ayodhya events. "Ram is a socially sensitive issue and people do not come out openly like they do in the north, except at the time of the elections," explains a state minister. Yet he is certain that the biggest beneficiary of the Congress(I)'s declining support will be the Telugu Desam, not the BJP.

The insensitivity of the Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy Government has not helped the party's image. The ministry took an ambivalent stand when the resolution against the demolition was taken up in the Assembly till a minister, Mohammed Jani, and two Muslim MLAs of the party threatened to resign.

In Karnataka, the fear is that the Congress(I)'s vote base may have shrunk, especially among the minorities, traditional supporters of the party. The Muslims feel that the party had played dirty with the Muslims on Ayodhya.

The BJP is not feeling very secure either. The party which won four seats in its dramatic debut in the last Lok Sabha poll, was routed in the Assembly by-elections last year. It is now making frantic efforts to cash in on the Ayodhya issue. But there have been no complaints on the Moily Government's handling of the recent communal riots. Moily gave the police a free hand.

In Tamil Nadu, having always piggybacked on one of the two Dravidian parties for the past 25 years, Congress(I)

leaders are a confused lot today. The reason: their alliance with the ruling AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] rests on shaky ground. Worse, the BJP has been moving closer to the AIADMK. If an alliance is formed, the BJP is sure to get a couple of Lok Sabha and at least 20 to 30 Assembly seats, all at the expense of the Congress(I).

Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha is upset with the Congress(I) for its failure to stop Subramanian Swamy's campaign to dislodge her. Though the Moopanar faction would only be too ready to break with her, the PCC(I) chief Vazhapadi Ramamurthy is likely to oppose any snapping of ties with the AIADMK.

If the AIADMK does break away, the Congress(I) may have no option but to realign with its old ally, the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]. Both parties now have a common enemy—the BJP. Moreover, the DMK is not averse to an alliance with the Congress(I) now that it is no longer headed by a member of the Gandhi-Nehru clan. The bottomline, however, is that the Congress(I) is still not in a position to go it alone.

In Kerala, the Babri Masjid demolition almost brought down the Congress(I)-led UDF [United Democratic Front] government. This is because the IUML [Indian Union Muslim League], with 19 out of 89 UDF seats in the Assembly, is a major partner in the coalition. The Ayodhya outrage, predictably, strained relations between the two partners and the League threatened to walk out of the front.

Rao has been working overtime to appease the party. But the IUML itself faces an internal crisis with hardliners decrying the betrayal of Muslims by the Congress(I) in failing to protect the mosque in Ayodhya. National IUML leaders Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait and G.M. Banatwala publicly demanded that the party sever ties with the UDF Government. The IUML's concern is that if it continues to support the Congress(I), the Muslim community may switch loyalties to its rival, the banned ISS [expansion not given].

For the Congress(I), the BJP is the other challenger. Though it has no presence in the Assembly, it polled a substantial percentage of votes. In a future election, the BJP will split the Congress(I) votes to aid the CPI(M)-led Left Front. Sensing their perilous position, dissidents, who have been campaigning for K. Karunakaran's ouster as chief minister, have quietened down. But for the Congress(I), this should not be a cause for complacency.

In fact, in the entire country, the Congress(I) needs to work out an effective strategy to counter the BJP's onslaught, if it is to retain its reputation of being the premier national party.

BJP Bihar Leader Profiled, Interviewed

93AS0684E Cochin THE WEEK in English 7 Mar 93 pp 14-15

[Kanhaiah Bhelari Profiles and Interviews Shatrughan Sinha: "Narasimha Rao and Shabana Azmi Are A National Shame"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] He is cut out for the role. A one-man BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] battalion to ram Janata Dal comic hero Laloo Yadav on his own turf. Rough, rugged and rambunctious, Shatrughan Sinha is one person who can match Laloo, the political showman, word for word, deed for deed.

If Laloo thrives on theatrics, Sinha is a natural at playing to the gallery. The favourite villain of Bollywood excelled in the game of one-upmanship to emerge a leading man in his own right. Long before Laloo leapt on to the centrestage of Bihar's politics and became a newsmaker, Sinha has been making waves in the media. Not merely by his inimitable posturings and film dialogues but by his off-screen utterings as well.

Very much in the Laloo mould, Sinha would shoot his mouth off at the drop of a publicity hint earning himself the sobriquet 'Shotgun' Sinha. He would pull no punches, whoever the target or whatever the issue. Laloo is a terror to even his own partymen, and so was Sinha to filmdom. He once created a scare in an elite Bombay locality by when he fired off a revolver outside another macho hero's apartment.

Indeed, Sinha has been as controversial as Laloo. But neither the flak from fellow-stars nor frowns of the media could restrain him. Shades of the politician-in-the-making, perhaps. He gambled into the rough and tumble of politics signing on with the National Party floated by Dev Anand after the Emergency. That turned out to be as disastrous as me [as published] of his film roles. The party was a non-starter and Sinha was back in the grease-paint world.

He made a come-back to the political limelight in 1989 by jumping onto the bandwagon of V.P. Singh then on overdrive to 'clean up the establishment'. Sinha's stardust second to complement the lustre of Mr. Clean's image. They hit the vote-trail in the Hindi belt. Though Sinha was a big hit especially in his native Bihar, with his fiery oratory, it turned out [to] be a perfect mismatch. Sinha simply did not fit into the power scenario scripted by VP for VP. "He believes in the corruption of votes but not corruption of money. As Prime Minister, he was busy giving a build-up to his image at the cost of the country and the party (Janata Dal). His weakness is selling his 'honest image'," says Sinha with his characteristic flourish.

Sinha is now talking the language of the BJP, which dreams of the return of the native to beard Laloo. The star is quite at home, literally, though his no-frills residence in Patna is no patch on his dream house in

Bombay. Gone are the trappings of glamour—no flashy suits, no slick hair-do, not even the customary goggles. Clad in a grey stone-washed shirt and fading green trouser, Sinha talks effusively about the BJP and its power troika—'Advaniji, Joshi and Vajpayeeji'. All three prime ministerial material, he says.

Sinha predicts a mid-term poll as the P.V. Narasimha Rao government will fall before the end of the year. And in true film style, he says he would opt for the 'female welfare department' if offered a berth in the BJP cabinet at the Centre.

At the moment though he is unleashed on Bihar. The BJP leadership asked him to tour the state's 52 districts to shore up the party's image. And he was more than willing, despite his busy shooting schedule, playing the lead in eight films. "I am a busy politician and an active actor," he says in his deep-throated voice that made him such a rage among fans. Within days of the interview to THE WEEK, Sinha was headed for Bombay to complete his immediate shooting commitments.

From the second week of March, he would be barn-storming Bihar carrying the saffron flag. He proved a crowd-puller as witnessed by the huge turn-out at a BJP rally in early February which was addressed among others by Advani. He has been quietly cultivating the voters ever since 1987, distributing relief to the flood and famine affected. His fans' association, which had been doing the groundwork, has now merged with the BJP.

Sinha is optimistic of a "very bright" future for the party in Bihar. "Our victory will surprise the whole country," he says sounding almost boastful. Would the backwards back the BJP? He has a counter-query: "Do the backwards want to become more backward by being with Laloo Yadav?" In any case, he asserts, "Jai Sriram" has brought about a new awakening among the people.

He now lets go at Laloo. What has Laloo given to the backwards? Lawlessness. A depleted exchequer. Corruption—"it has increased a thousand-fold during the three years of his rule." Sinha had an old score to settle with Laloo. Back in 1989, when VP was on his crusade against Rajiv Gandhi, both were present at a Janata Dal platform at Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh. Subodh Kant Sahay introduced Sinha as one of the leaders of the 'total revolution' movement of Jayaprakash Narayan. The non-nonsense Laloo promptly interrupted Sahay to point out that Sinha was never part of JP's movement.

Sinha does not forget or forgive humiliations whether perceived or otherwise. The defeat at the hands of former matinee idol Rajesh Khanna in Delhi still rankles. Though, as a disciplined soldier, he would still contest the Lok Sabha byelection from Patna in May if the party high command so desires. But his own preference would be to first do battle with Khanna. "He defeated me by unfair means, but I will settle the scores through fair means," he swears.

That would have to wait, now that the BJP leadership has anointed him the Bihar general of the Hindutva brigade. A query about the demolition of the mosque gets under his skin: "First, you correct yourself. It was not a mosque but a dilapidated structure where namaz was not offered during the last 55 years, but puja was being offered for more than 50 years." The BJP's best spokesmen couldn't have put it more vehemently.

He bristles at the suggestion that the demolition was a national shame. And reels off his own list of 'national shames' (Sinha used to send the film audience into raptures with his long-winding dialogues). "A man like Narasimha Rao occupying the prime ministerial chair is a national shame. The way the matter (Ayodhya issue) is being handled by the PM is a national shame. The Rs 3,400-crore scam is a national shame. The demolition of 38 temples in Kashmir is a national shame. The role of pseudo-secularists—political leaders, media people, cine artistes like Shabana Azmi—is a national shame."

Sinha has little doubt that all 'these secular' people talk rot. Take the Bombay riots, for instance. "They (the secular set) hesitate to say that the riots started after Hindus were killed at Jogeshwari. How can they say so? After all they are 'secular'," he intones hardly hiding the sarcasm. In fact, (Shiv Sena chief Bal) Thackeray Saheb played a laudable role by protecting Muslims. He blames politicians of all parties barring the BJP and the Sena for the riots.

He is bugged with the media. And by THE WEEK too—and its cover story 'Bombay is not for Hindus alone'. "You could have mentioned that 'Bombay is not only for Muslims or that Bombay is for all. But you did not. Can I ask 'why'?" He says the media had made it difficult for him to define secularism. "If I speak the language of Dilip Padgaonkar and Aroon Purie, editors of THE TIMES OF INDIA and INDIA TODAY, respectively, I am considered secular. But if I speak the language of Girilal Jain and Arun Shourie, I am considered communal."

It is vintage Shatrughan Sinha. Some blunt talk, to the point of sounding outrageous. He has the bearing of a man who has been wronged. "If I talk in favour of the majority community, then I am branded communal. But I am regarded as secular the moment I start speaking in favour of the minority community." In the same breath, he adds: "I am not a Hindu as projected by BBC and CNN. I am a Hindu having respect for all religions."

The BJP is projecting him as the chief minister-in-waiting. But like a true-born politician, he fudges the issue. "It all depends on the central leadership. It is such a big responsibility. The BJP has a lot of leaders fit for the job."

The state BJP chief Tarakant Jha could not agree more. He was not much amused by all that talk of grooming Sinha for the chief ministership. "It is not the tradition in our party to give such a big responsibility to a newcomer," Jha told THE WEEK.

Sinha's reaction was characteristic of the shrewd politician on the prowl: "Tarakantjee is a respected leader and he must know." And then a significant rider: "One should know that merit matters in all fields. Sachin Tendulkar is a newcomer in Indian cricket but he would qualify as captain." Obviously, like all good actors, Sinha has adapted rather well to his new role.

Video Producer Said Ready to Spread BJP Message

93AS0684C Calcutta SUNDAY in English 6 Mar 93 p 26

[Article by Ketan Narottam Tanna: "Video Wars"]

[Text] Fact: Dr J.K. Jain, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP [Member of Parliament] and popularly known as the video doctor, has compiled a video cassette for his party entitled, "Ayodhya 6 December, 1992: Kya Hua, Kisne Kiya, Kyon Kiya?" that tells the story of the demolition of the "mosque-like structure" at Ayodhya and the events following it, as the BJP would like it to be told. The cassette is to be distributed by BJP offices throughout the country for a price of Rs 100, it is learnt.

Fact: Dr J.K. Jain has bought a transponder on the Arabsat satellite, which he will use to beam television programmes into India from Hong Kong or Mauritius.

If the BJP needed a propagandist to counter the government's charge of "betrayal" and " perfidy" on Ayodhya, Dr Jain is its answer to it. In him, the sangh parivar has the ideal campaigner on a medium that rivals only religion in power and reach—network television.

It isn't clear if the Ayodhya cassette is going to be telecast on satellite. But Jain will soon be in a position to do just that. The question is not whether he can gull Indian audiences with his clips. More disturbing is the fact that communal messages can now be sent out to the entire country and the subcontinent. An alarmed Union home ministry is seriously thinking of ordering a enquiry into Jain's purchase of the transponder. But such an exercise would not be of any use said a home ministry official, explaining, "Our laws cannot prevent programmes from being beamed from Hong Kong."

The controversial video cassette compiled by the BJP contains interviews conducted by Dr Jain with top BJP and RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] leaders, including the ailing Balasaheb Deoras. All of them felt that it was impossible to contain the feelings of the Hindus. M.M. Joshi even goes to the extent of blaming the Prime Minister for the events in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992.

As the interview progresses, Joshi thunders: "Why did the PM [Prime Minister] assure the sadhus and sants that a Ram mandir would be constructed? Balasaheb Deoras, the RSS chief, assures viewers that "if we could fight the tyranny of the Emergency, we will surely survive the ban and come out victorious." The cassette

also contains hysterical interviews with fanatic kar sevaks from all over the country with a majority of them issuing such warnings as, "Khoon ki ganga bahaenge par mandir yehin banaenge (let there be a bloodbath, but the temple will be constructed at this site)."

Earlier too, Jain had produced three cassettes on the Ayodhya issue for the BJP. The first one, Bhai Prakat Krupala made in 1989, dealt with the shilanyas ceremony. The next cassette was titled after a popular Hindi movie, "Pran Jahun Par Vachan Na Jaye." It was made in 1990, and focussed on the storming of the masjid on 30 October that year when several people died in police firing. The third cassette, "Saanch Ko Aanch Nahi" was ready just before the 6 December, 1992, events. But the video cassette was hurriedly withdrawn after the Babri Masjid was brought down.

Dr Jain, of course, has also made propaganda films for such political parties as the Congress(I), Chandra Shekhar's Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP) and the left parties. But the difference this time is that Dr Jain will also have a private channel to beam his films. Said a senior BJP leader: "What is wrong if Jain starts a channel? And what is wrong if we use the channel for broadcasting our views? After all, for years both Doordarshan and All India Radio have spread nothing but disinformation about us."

Media observers feel that Jain's private channel and his 120-odd video-on-wheels vans could make a big difference in the next general elections. Especially in the rural areas where Doordarshan's network is not all that effective. And as the BJP is gearing up to project itself as a responsible and disciplined political outfit, the video doctor's media acumen will be handy for the party.

BJP Economic Counselor Interviewed on Policies

93AS0673E Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 12 Mar 93 p 30

[Jay Dubashi Interviewed by Shastri Ramachandran: "We Will Do Away With the High-Tax, High-Cost Regime"]

[Text] Dr. Jay Dubashi is the convenor of the Economic Cell of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the party's spokesman on economic affairs. A prominent columnist on economic and business affairs in reputed publications, Dubashi, who has held senior positions in dailies and magazines, joined the BJP in 1985. He has been a member of the national executive of the party of eight years and is an influential voice within the party. His major contribution has been in the preparation of the economic policy statement, 'Humanistic Approach to Economic Development—A Swadeshi Alternative' released by the BJP in last year.

In his interview to the *Weekly*, Dubashi answers some of the questions that persist in spite of the comprehensive economic policy statement. Excerpts:

How do you link the BJP as a driving force behind your economic policy and its identification with the Hindu culture?

The main driving force behind any development, particularly economic development, is national pride. Only a proud Indian can build a proud, self-sufficient and strong Indian economy. The Japanese are a very proud people with a strong sense of national identity and this accounts for their economic power.

In India, the national identity can only be Hindu. Development is not value-free and values which make for a strong sense of national identity are a basic input for economic development. You cannot separate a cultural identity from what motivates a people towards economic development.

Has the Swadeshi Alternative been formulated in anticipation of the international isolation the BJP might be confronted with?

There is no question of international isolation. The world simply cannot ignore India. So the question of trying to tailor policies to suit the requirements of foreign capital does not arise.

We feel that, in the first stage, the economy has to stand on its own feet and that can be done only through an effective swadeshi movement. Swadeshi does not mean self-sufficiency or cutting ourselves off from the international mainstream. It is a broader concept of self-reliance where the nation makes use of its major strengths to enlarge its presence in the international market.

Liberalisation is opening the doors to multinational corporations. Do you think this policy should be selective and in what areas?

We have strong reservations on the role of multinationals in our economy. Our policy is to restrict the entry of multinational corporations to high-tech industries, that is, industries in which we have no access to the latest modern technology.

Isn't the Swadeshi Alternative and self-reliance a rediscovery for the BJP?

No. Self-reliance has always been the cornerstone of our economic policy. Self-reliance and nationalism go together. But as I said earlier, self-reliance should not be confused with self-sufficiency, where in trying to produce everything within the confines of our economy, you actually restrict your growth.

On the restriction of multinationals do you see the BJP being closer to the left than the Congress?

There is absolutely no meeting point between our policies and those of the Left. We are in favour of globalisation. But globalisation cannot be one-sided. It does not mean, as the architects of the new economic policy

argue, one-way traffic for multinational corporations. India cannot be just a market for foreign products and goods.

The Islamic bloc is a major economic force. Given the antipathy of some Islamic countries, will the BJP's coming to power affect the flow of strategic supplies, particularly oil?

Trade is trade and business is business. There are all kinds of countries in the world with their own philosophies, some of which are characterised as fundamentalist. Wrongly or rightly. Now we are not a fundamentalist party. But even if we were, there is absolutely no question of the world refusing to trade with us on that ground. As I said, the world simply cannot ignore India. And the stronger we grow, the less will it be able to do so.

What would be the first priority of the BJP in economic policy, marking a break from the usual course, as it would be felt by the people?

An economy with 900 million people and at such a level of development cannot be changed easily. We will have to go in small steps. But our aim would be to move away from the Nehruvian model and from the high-tax, high-cost regime that this model has created.

Our priority would be very different from the present one. The present government has only a new industrial policy, it does not have a new economic policy. Such an approach ignores the large sector of agriculture. A BJP government would work for quicker and greater development of agriculture and agro-based industries, providing employment to millions of farmers rather than concentrate on the organised industrial sector alone.

The public sector has to be overhauled completely because it has failed to deliver. This will also be a major priority.

With regard to labour, we do not agree that any government can implement the so-called exit policy without providing enough social security for the displaced labour.

The first task of a BJP government would be to set up a national social security council which would draw up social security for not only for organised industrial labour but also for other sections of society.

BJP Impact in Bihar Seen Growing

93AS0682B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 17 Mar 93 p 12

[Article by Samir Kumar Singh: "A BJP Atmosphere Has Begun To Be Created in Bihar"]

[Text] Bihar is known as the land of change. There started the strong winds of social and political changes that spread all over India after 6 December. In order to measure the effect of these winds, Lal Krishna Advani

visited Bihar on 6-7 February followed by the 17-19 February visit by the BJP President Murli Manohar Joshi.

Mr. Advani's and Dr. Joshi's visits to Bihar are important because the parties within the National Front and the left wing have declared Bihar to be the invincible fort of anti-factionalism. That is why the anti-factionalism rally was organized in Patna, Bihar's capital. However, it was learned during Mr. Advani's visit that all of his meetings had larger attendance than did the "goodwill rally." It should be remembered that the people from all over the country had come here to participate in the anti-factionalism rally, while only the local people attended Mr. Advani's and Dr. Joshi's meetings. As the result of this, the Bihar BJP workers were encouraged after Mr. Advani's and Dr. Joshi's visits. They are beginning to hope that in Patliputrapur, the capital of ancient Magdha, where bugles of changes in government were always played first, another change is taking shape.

During the last 2-3 years, Lalu Prasad Yadav had the opportunity to form a caste equation in his favor. The wall that he had built between the affluent and the backward groups developed a crack during Mr. Advani's visit. One reason for this could be that there has been disagreement over Mandal versus Karpuri formula here for one month. Sharad Yadav tried to push it back by establishing a committee to bring the parties together; however, Sharad Yadav could not remove the backward classes's suspicion toward the government. The law-and-order situation in Bihar has affected the backward classes also. The economic deterioration there is known to everyone. The professors in the university are suffering because they have not been paid their salaries. Anarchy is increasing in the university because no salaries have been paid and also because changes were made without consulting representatives of the teacher. The dissatisfaction felt by teachers and students has also helped create a pro-BJP environment. It was noted that teachers and students had participated with great enthusiasm in the meetings addressed by Mr. Advani and Dr. Joshi. The fake wall that Prasad Yadav had built, and in which the Janata Dal defectors had already made some cracks, was torn down by the hopeful backward classes that rushed to attend the BJP rallies.

The local problems of Bihar are there. We cannot deny the fact that people thronged to Mr. Advani's meetings mostly because of their negative attitude toward Lalu Yadav's government. The increasing religious feeling among the people was the main reason for their attendance. Bihar has not been left untouched by the Ayodhya incident. Many people from Bihar had participated in the Ayodhya kar sewa activities. They got the people excited when they shared their experience on their return. Most of the Hindus have begun to believe that secularism actually means pacification of minority religious groups and religious suppression of the majority and indigenous Hindus.

As for the minority people's reaction to Mr. Advani's and Dr. Joshi's visits to Bihar, they kept a status quo and remained busy with their work during these visits. It would be natural for them to have some apprehension. Mr. Advani expressed the opinion during his Bihar trip that they were not against the Muslims. He said that the Muslim will find themselves more secure in a BJP government. However, the Muslims have to join the nation's mainstream. No separate laws will be passed for the Hindus and Muslims.

The minority groups in Bihar lean toward Lalu Prasad Yadav and they probably will support him in the next elections also. They have been disillusioned with the Congress (I) and their supporting the BJP is out of question. Still, there were discussions that if the Hindus continue to move toward the BJP, the Muslims would not want to openly oppose the future central government, and might make some kind of compromise with the BJP.

While Mr. Advani's and Dr. Joshi's visits to Bihar have hinted at change in the regional equation, it would not be accurate to say that the BJP in Bihar is in position to win a majority in the elections. All we can say is that the two leaders' visit has helped the Hindu feelings to surface in Bihar.

However, Lalu Prasad Yadav has not become obsolete in Bihar. He is also planning to tour Bihar. He says that Mr. Advani has said that Lalu had made him a hero by arresting him in Bihar, and he can make him a zero also. He has started his campaign to stop the BJP wave.

Even though the BJP has benefitted by Mr. Advani and Dr. Joshi's visits, the BJP cannot win there easily if the anti-BJP forces unite there. The Congress party is considered a strong party in Bihar even today. After Mr. Advani's visit, Mr. Sitaram Kesari, central welfare minister; Dr. Jagan Nath Misra, the opposition leader; Maulwi Hidayatullah Khan, president of the state Congress party; Tariq Anwar; and Krishna Shahi are participating in the anti-factionalism conference in Bihar. Sita Ram Kesari is attacking the BJP and Lal Krishan Advani very strongly in his rallies. Mr. Kesari has declared that only the Congress party can oppose the BJP factionalism. He called the BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani a "Rama peddler" and said that Rama could not be sold in Bihar. Dr. Misra and Maulwi Hidayatullah are still touring every district. There is no dearth of people in Bihar who believe that while the BJP wants to exploit religion, Chief Minister Lalu Yadav wants to control politics by spreading communal hatred.

If Lalu Yadav sincerely wants to stop the BJP emergence in Bihar, he will be seen joining forces with the Congress later. Otherwise, he will not be able to control the increasing influence on the BJP. There were hints of this during Mr. Advani's and Dr. Joshi's visits.

Leftists, Centrists Said Aligning Against BJP
93AS0684B New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
15 Mar 93 p 62

[Article by Javed Ansari: "Non-BJP Opposition: Mending Fences"]

[Text] The fear of gradual extinction, of being overwhelmed by a tidal wave of Hindutva, has set off a churn in the splintered Janata Dal [JD] and Left. Party stalwarts are reaching out to each other to build a bulwark against communal politics. This was in evidence last fortnight when two former prime ministers and bitter rivals, V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar, broke bread together for the first time in two years. And in a move not unrelated, the two Yadav supremos, Laloo and Mulayam Singh, joined Jyoti Basu at a rally in Calcutta, in a public demonstration of their decision to fight the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] together.

The Left and centrist parties' determination to bring about a realignment of the Janata Dal factions is palpable. Chandra Shekhar, who never had a good word for V.P. Singh, is now willing "to work together to save the nation," while the Raja of Manda concedes that "whatever happened between us is a part of the past."

Two parallel unity moves are afoot. One initiated by the Left, the other by Orissa Chief Minister Biju Patnaik, R.K. Hegde and others of the pre-'89 Janata Dal, such as Arun Nehru, Arif Mohammed Khan, Satyapal Malik. The Left aims to bring V.P. Singh, Laloo Yadav and Mulayam Singh Yadav together, to create a strong bulwark of backward forces against the BJP in the cow belt. They believe if the BJP is trounced in the cow belt, it would end its ambition to capture power in Delhi. But as CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] leader Prakash Karat says: "To combat the BJP in the heartland it is imperative that the Janata Dal and Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party join hands."

This perception is shared by the Janata Dal. V.P. Singh seems ready to shed his antagonism against Mulayam Singh. On the eve of the Calcutta rally, he asked Basu and Laloo Yadav to persuade Mulayam Singh to come to an understanding. The unity moves are based on reasoned arithmetic. In the 1991 elections, the BJP got 32.79 per cent of the vote in Uttar Pradesh while the Janata Dal got 21.3 and Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party 10.2. Together, not only would their votes theoretically go up to 31.5 per cent, but the psychological impact of an alliance would generate its own momentum.

But Mulayam Singh, for the moment, refuses to play ball. When Laloo Yadav sounded him out on V.P. Singh's proposals, he was noncommittal: "I am going ahead with Kanshi Ram, others can join me if they want." The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister has his preconditions: leadership of the proposed combination and the final say in ticket distribution.

The other unity effort stems from Patnaik who has been following up on his talks with V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar, and stalwarts like Hedge, who too has been pleading for unity.

The inevitable stumbling block may be the leadership issue: V.P. Singh or Chandra Shekhar? But pressure from various Janata Dal cadres suggests the two leaders will settle for an alliance with no single chieftain, and let the issue be resolved in due course.

Interestingly, the non-BJP opposition is convinced that the real battle has to be fought by the ruling party at the Centre. The Left has been urging Rao to commit the Congress(I) to battle the BJP and has extended support to him on this condition. But it remains unconvinced of Rao's resolve. Ajit Singh's faction of the Janata Dal, which has been supporting Rao, would also like him to spell out his stand. But the V.P. Singh-led Janata Dal continues to be bitterly opposed to Rao.

Implicit in the emphasis on the Congress(I) taking up the battle is the political inadequacy of the Left and centrist parties. The Left's sway is confined to West Bengal and Kerala with pockets of influence in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. And the Janata Dal cannot claim any real following outside the Hindi belt. Therefore, it is on the Congress(I), with its all-India reach, that the Janata Dal and Left must bank to spearhead the offensive against the BJP.

Analyst Questions CPM Fear of BJP Challenge
93P5011A Calcutta BARTAMAN in Bengali 14 Mar
p 6

[Article by Barun Sengupta: "Is CPM Afraid of BJP, Even in Bengal?"]

[Text] Is CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist] now afraid of BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in West Bengal? There is no doubt that CPM leaders have been quite alarmed by the recent rapid rise in support for BJP. CPM leadership knows that should BJP capture the throne in Delhi, within six months they will drive CPM out of Writers' Building [Bengal state parliament]. Yet CPM has never really expressed fear of BJP before. Recent statements by some CPM leaders has caused observers to question, Are Marxists now fearing BJP's rising influence? Are they afraid that BJP will quickly fill up the vacuum created by the dissolution of Congress (I)?

The observers are saying that CPM leaders showed their fear by giving a warning to the party members at the district level. They [party leaders] are showing great interest in spreading anti-BJP propaganda as well. Observers see Marxists leaders expressing their panic in the way they are threatening Calcutta businessmen and industrialists over their "crime" of attending the function led by former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh. They [CPM leaders] want to convince powerful individuals that those who hobnob with BJP will be held

accountable. Observers predict that within a short time, CPM will initiate widespread attacks upon BJP supporters.

Observers were astonished recently to hear Jyoti Basu's speech at Calcutta's Brigade Maidan. In his speech, Basu not only threatened businessmen and industrialists who were present at Kalyan Singh's reception, but even stated that BJP and Shiv Sena are driving Bengalis out of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Jyoti Basu "warned" BJP on this subject. This [irresponsible speech] simply cannot be tolerated. It is the impression of observers that Jyoti Basu is trying to convince Bengalis that BJP is anti-Bengali and will destroy Bengalis if they come to power.

In the analysis of observers, if state political leaders had not begun to fear BJP, they would not have engaged in this [propaganda]. They are truly afraid of the increasing influence of BJP in Bengal. Thus, they will threaten, cajole, whatever.

It is my opinion, however, that it is a mistake to fear BJP. CPM leaders know very well that BJP has not built a strong organizational structure in West Bengal. No well-known accomplished politician [BJP member] has yet appeared in this state. CPM leaders must know that without these two prerequisites being fulfilled, it is impossible for a political party to quickly emerge in this state. They also know that BJP, in order to seize power in Calcutta, must first come into power in Delhi. BJP could not and would not simply take over Writers' building.

The question remains, why is CPM raising such a fuss about BJP? Why is CPM threatening the businessmen who are getting close to BJP? Why are they telling Bengalis to wake up?

There are many reasons:

First, CPM leaders understand that the common man of West Bengal has moved away from them and that people have become fed up with CPM's games of having people beaten and rigging elections. As long as the opposition vote is not split, there is no way that the Left Front can remain in power. It is for this reason that CPM is shouting, "BJP, BJP." CPM wants the opposition vote to be split [between Congress (I) and BJP]. If they succeed in splitting the opposition vote and use selected rigging and beatings, they may squeeze through to victory with just 40 percent of the vote. Congress (I) can get 35 percent of the vote and leave 25 percent for BJP in this scenario. In this way, the Marxists may retain Writers' building.

It is noteworthy that CPM is now courting alliances with small insignificant parties such as SUC [Socialist Unity Center] that they previously disregarded. Inviting their leaders to Alimuddin Street [CPM headquarters], they feed them tea and biscuits and talk about alliances. CPM is very anxious to win over these people who were "enemies." CPM leaders know that the situation in the

state is so bad that even the help of these otherwise insignificant people can give a boost to the ruling party.

CPM leaders are changing their political strategy in order to save their own hide. On the one hand, they want to reduce the number of enemies, even the small ones. On the other hand, the strategy is clearly to split the opposition vote.

CPM has another reason for screaming, "BJP, BJP." They hope to win over Muslim voters. They think that Muslims will lean towards CPM if they see the party as leading the fight against BJP. There is no doubt that CPM would be greatly helped if, say, half of the Muslims in this state voted for them.

One question still remains, Why is CPM threatening businessmen who went to see Kalyan Singh? There are two reasons, one political, one economic.

First, CPM wants these powerful individuals, especially those leaning towards BJP. They simply will not let them go.

Second, by scaring them, CPM hopes to elicit more money from the businessmen who are closer to themselves. These businessmen have already given a lot of support to the CPM party and its bigwigs. But they [party bigwigs] thirst for even more support. They use mastans [paid thugs] to carry out their wishes. They know that generally speaking businessmen are rather cowardly by nature. They don't invite trouble. They only want money. CPM thus has a lot of leeway to scare them. The feeling is, the more we scare them, the more money we get.

The final question is, Why is the CPM trying to "wake up" Bengalis? Why are they talking about Bengalis being driven out of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan?

It seems to me that the intent is to establish in the minds of Bengalis that BJP is a "foreign" party. This, even though CPM knows that BJP is a national party which includes Bengalis. This, even though CPM knows that even if BJP divides Muslims and Hindus, it is at least making an impact amongst Hindus while CPM's politics is purely opportunistic and discredited.

Thus, CPM is directing its "awaken Bengalis" campaign against BJP. CPM hopes to keep its political platform alive, this in an age where Marxism is dying and communist leaders are bereft of any guiding ideology or direction. When CPM has to give up power, they will engage in this rhetoric even more.

CPM Said to View BJP as Greatest Threat to Their Power

93P50129A *Calcutta ALOKPAAT* in Bengali 15 Mar 93
pp 22-31

[Article by Shankar Ghosh: "CPM Regards BJP, not Mamata, as its Greatest Enemy"]

[Text] In the last state assembly elections, West Bengal voters first began to think of BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] as a possible alternative to CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist]. If this inclination persists, what effect will it have on state politics? Will Congress consent to joining the Left Front to oppose BJP?

The first interim elections were held in West Bengal in 1969. Those who were familiar with the politics of the time remember that it was thought Congress would dominate state politics for a long time to come. They watched the leftists and the United Front criticize and attack Congress but gave this little importance, even applauding occasionally. They thought the people wanted the stability which a well-established party like Congress would bring. They were sure that Congress would prevail. The results, however, were that Congress legislators were reduced from 127 to 55 and the United Front received 214. CPM became the biggest party in the state parliament for the first time with 60 seats.

It is thus a risk to estimate a party's strength in parliament based upon its popularity. Everyone, for example, accepts that the size of the crowd drawn by Mamata Bannerjee on November 25 was perhaps unprecedented. The size is compared to that drawn in 1972 by the joint appearance of Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujib Rahman. [passage omitted]

After 15 years in power, it is natural that Jyoti Basu should lose his popularity. Congress had previously been in power for 20 years and was then soundly defeated. If history repeats itself, the Left Front doesn't have much more than a few years left. The Leftists came to power promising to reduce people's suffering. If people believed that the Left Front had diligently attempted to fulfill this promise, they would have been more forgiving. On the contrary, the absolute negligence of the Leftists has caused them to lose their influence in both rural and urban areas. CPM is now very worried about this. Jyoti Basu wants to carry out an industrialization campaign between now and the 1996 state parliament elections on a scale which will allow him to claim he has kept his promise. This is why he is so anxious to invite foreign and non-resident capital just now.

Congress perhaps does not understand that they would not naturally fill up the vacuum created by CPM's exit. Does anyone believe that during these 15 years, Congress has retained the ability to form a stable government? Congress's weakness is the Left Front's strength. If people seek an alternative to the CPM, it won't be Congress. Instead, they will seek out a new alternative, the BJP! In 1991, BJP kindled their presence in the state by running candidates for all 42 Lok Sabha and 294 Vidhan Sabha seats. Even though BJP candidates failed to gain a single seat, candidates came in second in many races. This proved that voters had begun to see BJP as an alternative to CPM.

Many are not willing to wait till 1996 to see where this trend will go. One group within Congress wants elections

anytime. Another group within Congress thinks Jyoti Basu will fall out of power this year and are waiting for this to happen first. There are many ways to uproot a state government before its allotted time has been reached. First there is article 356 whereby the state assembly may be dismissed and President's rule imposed. Of course it is the Home Minister who will rule in that case. [passage omitted]

Dismissing the Left Front government will not be so easy, however. In 1980, when Indira Gandhi returned to power, the West Bengal Congress asked her to dismiss the Left Front. Leftists expressed their fears. Still, Indira Gandhi did not move. Again in 1985, [after Rajiv Gandhi had been elected in a landslide] the cry for dismissal arose. Again, Rajiv did not move against the Left Front. In a way, it is amazing that even though it is easy for the Central Government to dismiss an unliked state government, Congress has not dismissed the Left Front in these 16 years. Now, we don't even see such an orchestrated call for dismissal. This, despite the fact that apart from V.P. Singh, no one outside the leftist group would even object. And Narasimha Rao's government does not count on the leftists' support for its existence.

Actually, the reason the government needs the support of the leftists is to help preserve Indian secularism and to defeat the Sangh Parivar [BJP, VHP and RSS]. The leftists understand that these fundamentalists are the greatest threat to their existence. They have no power to stop them. It may be said that in the Hindu fundamentalist belt of Hindi speaking states, the leftist parties hardly even exist. The leftists must depend upon Congress to help them in their fight.

This is a novel situation in this country's politics for leftists. Leftists have always stood against Congress as representing bourgeois interests. Anti-Congress sentiment was the fuel that ignited leftist leaders. They not only formed their own alliance in order to defeat Congress, they have joined all of the non-Congress parties in alliances in order to defeat Congress. Leftists, in fact have played a large role in helping make the BJP this country's second largest party. They fully supported the 1989 joint election strategy to defeat Congress. After Janata Dal and BJP split up, the leftists formed an amicable alliance with Janata Dal. [passage omitted]

The leftists now feel that their greatest enemy is not Congress but the BJP. They see BJP as the nation's greatest enemy also. BJP's organizational strength and national appeal has so augmented that CPM knows they may not be able to stop it, even with alliances. The leftists are thus very anxious to enlist Congress support in an attempt to stem the fundamentalist tide. Congress has the same interest. It is not yet possible to state what form this cooperation will take. There is no doubt though that the fundamentalists will take all constitutional and non-constitutional measures to seize power. Thus, the cooperation between leftists and Congress will not just take the form of stopping fundamentalist propaganda, but will probably necessitate election alliances.

The two sides necessarily differ on the extent and nature of the cooperation. Historically, only the CPI [Communist Party-India] has had an election alliance with Congress. [passage omitted]

The state [Bengal] Congress leaders are all against an alliance with CPM. They regard the proposed effort to join CPM in order to fight BJP as potentially damaging. BJP has up to this point never been strong in West Bengal. CPM is the greatest enemy of Congress. If out of fear of BJP, Congress joins the CPM, the gain will be CPM's. They will become even more sure of themselves. Thus Congress leaders in this state want to keep fighting against CPM. they regard this as more important than the fight against BJP. But the unity ends on this point. One faction wants to carry on the anti-CPM campaign with the hopes of winning the 1996 parliamentary elections. Another faction is not prepared to wait that long. They feel that people are already fed up with CPM and thus want mid-term elections. They know that Jyoti Basu, however, will not call these elections. Narasimha Rao won't dismiss the CPM government. Thus the only path left is to force Basu to resign.

The leader of this militant Congress group is Mamata Banerjee. She began to count the hours till CPM's death after the gathering [of 500,000 people] she called in November. She gave up her ministership. It is natural to wonder how long she can continue her militant program. She can't keep counting for three more years! She is trapped also, by being committed to this program and can't really do much else. Then it would be clear that she failed in her effort to count down the hours until the expiration of the Left Front.

This sort of movement also requires mass participation. The call to block the Writer's Building [Bengal Parliament] would necessarily involve clashes between CPM and Mamata Banerjee supporters. Called for March, the program has now been scheduled for May and even then not fully worked out. [Passage omitted]

Mid-term elections are doubtful even if national elections are held and Congress returns to power. In fact, the best way for Basu's government to get dismissed is for BJP to win the national elections. Mamata is not dismissing this possibility. BJP unhesitatingly supports Mamata Banerjee in this state and not without reason. Mamata's style of politics is in reality aiding the BJP!

CPI Holds Special Organizational Congress

Gupta Opens Congress

93AS0711A Madras THE HINDU in English
12 Mar 93 p 9

[Text] Thrissur, March 11—The Left parties should assert their independent identity in the struggle against communalism, price rise and the overall anti-people policies of the Government. This has become imperative in the wake of "the inconsistencies evident in the programmes of forces such as the Janata Dal and other

parties." This was stated by the CPI general secretary and MP, Mr. Indrajit Gupta. He was inaugurating the special organisational congress of the party that began here today.

Setting the stage for the discussions in the three-day delegate session, Mr. Gupta called upon the 500 odd delegates to introspect the shortcomings in the party set up and debate on means to be adopted to prepare the front organisations in facing the challenges posed by the communal forces represented by the Sangh Parivar on the one hand and the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government on the other.

The delay in the implementation of the Supreme Court judgment in the Mandal Commission case, the fallout of the withdrawal of subsidy on many varieties of fertilizers, the Dunkel proposals and the increasing attack on democracy are issues that have sufficient potential to mobilise the masses. "However, the party organisations have failed to make use of these opportunities till now," he said.

In what appeared to be a serious criticism of the section in the party who advocate a change in the constitution, Mr. Gupta said that any such changes cannot take place in a vacuum. Stressing the tremendous potential provided by the current political situation to mobilise the masses, Gupta appeared to suggest that the remedy to the current ills lay in making efforts to appeal to the masses and not any change in the party structure.

"The organisational structure of the party is determined by the conditions in which it is operating and the current line of operation from within the parliamentary system is being followed for a long time," he said. He contrasted this with the experience of the party while functioning under different circumstances such as the pre-independence days and the Telengana armed struggle days. The central issue, according to him, was whether to lay extra stress on extra-parliamentary forms of struggle or not.

Coming back to the political situation, Mr. Gupta felt that the resolution passed by the National Council in the first week of March, which said that the agenda for the party in the coming days was to fight against the twin dangers of communalism and the new economic policies of the Government needed no change.

Budget deceptive: Describing the Union and Railway budgets as deceptive, he stressed the need to launch mass struggles against them. Dismissing observations by some quarters that the budget is "election-oriented" as preposterous, Mr. Gupta said that there was nothing in the budget that was election-oriented. "The Government is implementing the dictates of the IMF World Bank with a vengeance."

Referring to the change in Congress leadership, Mr. Gupta dismissed the possibility of it taking place. Citing the example of the manner in which Mr. Sharad Pawar was chosen the Maharashtra Chief Minister, he said this

had once again proved that "there is no individual in the Congress(I) who is in a position to challenge the Prime Minister and Congress president.

12 Mar Meeting

93AS0711B Madras THE HINDU in English
13 Mar 93 p 9

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Thrissur, March 12—Constitution of a separate committee to coordinate the agitation and propaganda activities, periodical review of the performance of party members and leaders at various levels, identification and training a second line of leadership were some of the issues that drew serious attention of the delegates who participated in the debate over the note piloted by Mr. A.B. Bardhan in the first two days of the special organisational conference of the CPI [Communist Party of India] being held here.

Briefing the press on the proceedings of the delegate session that began yesterday, the party spokesman, Mr. Pauly V. Parakkal said that the focus of the debate was on means to gear up the party to face the challenges posed by communal and fascist forces to the unity of the country.

After a heated debate over the note presented by the National Council on 'Organisational Tasks', the congress was divided into three commissions—mass organisation and the party (headed by Mr. M.S. Krishnan), Cadre policy (headed by Mr. D. Raja) and Agit-Prop (headed by Mr. Atul Kumar Anjan). The three commissions had gone through all the amendments and suggestions that came in the course of the discussions and is expected to report back to the delegates later in the day today.

Elaborating on the tone of discussions, Mr. Parakkal and Mr. Shamim Faizi, National Council members of the party said that "a genuine concern to improve the functioning of the party was expressed by all those who participated in the discussions. Admitting that a large number of amendments were put forward by the delegates, Mr. Parakkal said that a section of the delegates even "went to the extent of saying that the present leadership cannot move the party forward."

But, the spokesman ruled out any change in the leadership in this special congress. He said that the special congress had only a limited agenda and the question of changing the leadership did not arise. He, however, added that the National Council was free to effect changes in the Central Executive or the Secretariat if it felt so.

The note presented at the Congress was in a sense a supplement to the Report on organisation adopted at the fifteenth party Congress held at Hyderabad. The tone of criticism that was evident in the Hyderabad session note presented by Mr. N.E. Balaram, was found in the present one also, this time piloted by Mr. Bardhan.

In terms of the overall focus, Mr. Bardhan's note appeared to repeat the need to infuse young blood into the party leadership, making party leaders accountable and ensuring that decisions taken at various levels are implemented. It also stressed the need to recapture the proletarian image of the party and for this, it was emphasised that the class and social background of party leaders should be considered seriously.

Even while putting on a brave face in countering charges that the CPI is slowly turning to be a social democratic party, Mr. Bardhan's note laid emphasis on ensuring that the representation from the peasantry, agricultural workers and trade unions were proportionate with their strength in the party. The note had made a clear case against what it described as more and more "middle class background of those who hold leadership positions in the party."

Urging the special congress to put an end to continuing with the category of "members-at-large," Mr. Bardhan's note called for making "every party branch as an organiser of mass organisation." It also warned against what it called "liberal tendency" in the name of autonomy of mass organisations. It clearly said that the only way to safeguard against sectarianism and liberalism in the mass organisation was to ensure that party cadre establish a firm link with the people at large. Stress was laid to carry out multifarious constructive activities. The note observed with criticism the trend developing in the party to "denigrate all such activities as reformist."

The inability of the party to draw people from deprived social and economic background, has been identified in the note as being due to the fact that very few members from these communities—backward and scheduled castes—hold positions of responsibility in the party at local and national levels. The virtual absence of woman in important positions were also noted and emphasis was laid that efforts should be made to involve these sections in the party.

Mr. Bardhan, however, added that this "should not mean that the party should reserve specific numbers for them in the elections." Making a pointed reference to such proposals in the Janata Dal, Mr. Bardhan said such "reservations and quota system will lead to a fiasco as had happened with the Janata Dal."

'No criticism of individuals': Expressing confidence that the organisational note prepared by the Central Executive Committee will be accepted by the special congress, a member of the secretariat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the overall mood in the session was genuine concern and unlike in the Hyderabad congress, there was hardly any criticism on individual leaders. He, however, conceded that there was a section which refused to see eye-to-eye with some in the leadership but they would only keep quiet.

While discussion on the organisational set-up will be resumed tomorrow where the reports of the three commissions will be placed before the delegates, the congress took up debate on changes in the party constitution today.

There is a significant section among the delegates who feel that there need not be a three-tier structure—secretariat, the central executive and the national council. In their opinion, the secretariat should be dissolved and the central executive should be made to take day-to-day decisions of the party. The issue is certain to draw a heated debate in the next two days. The National Council will have to meet immediately [words missing]

Constitution Changes Discussed

93AS0711C Madras *THE HINDU* in English
14 Mar 93 p 4

[Text] Thrissur, March 13—Sharp differences came to the fore on issues relating to amendments to the CPI [Communist Party of India] constitution on the third day of the special organisational conference of the party in progress here. The proposals placed by the Central Executive Council and piloted by party National Council member, Mr. Avtar Singh Malhotra were debated upon both yesterday and today.

The issues in focus are primarily on whether the party should continue with the existing pattern of the three tier leadership, consisting of the nine-member secretariat, 31 member Central Executive Council [CEC] and 125 member National Council or whether the Secretariat should be done away with and the CEC be made more compact with 21 members. Similarly, another issue on which members differed was on restricting the number of terms during which the general secretary, deputy general secretary and secretaries at state and lower levels could continue to hold these responsibilities.

Apart from these two major issues, the time interval between two party congresses, the current practice of the outgoing leadership proposing a panel for electing the new national council and whether the party should have a set of office bearers such as president, vice-presidents are other areas where amendments have been pressed for in the conference.

Even though these amendments were placed at the Hyderabad session in April last year, they had gone through another series of perusal by a sub-committee elected by the party congress then. Sharp differences again resulted in the placing of their original forms without any comment.

Presenting the overall mood in the session, most delegates felt that most of the amendments suggested, especially that of doing away with the secretariat and having a two tier party structure as well as restricting to two terms in case of those holding responsible positions will be passed in the special congress. Similarly, they felt that

the majority of the delegates are in favour of the outgoing leadership proposing more names than the prescribed strength of committees and then hold elections through secret ballots.

Going by these indications, it appears that the party constitution will undergo far-reaching amendments. In case of these coming through, the National Council will have to meet immediately after the special congress and implement the changes.

Meanwhile, the note presented by the National Council secretary Mr. A.B. Bardhan in the conference yesterday on party organisation was adopted by the session unanimously today with some changes. The setting up of an "agit-prop" department at the national and State levels, issuing guidelines to party units on the class and social composition of delegates to party congresses, and more importantly, to subject the Central leadership to strict review of their performance periodically are some of the specific proposals.

According to an official note released here today, "to ensure that decisions are implemented, it has been made mandatory for the Central secretariat to give a work report to each session of the national council and annual assessment of collective and individual discharge of responsibilities assigned."

Congress Ends, Conclusions Told

93AS0711D Madras *THE HINDU* in English
15 Mar 93 p 9

[Text] Thrissur, March 14—The special organisational congress of the CPI [Communist Party of India] ended here today after making far-reaching changes in the party constitution such as abolishing the party secretariat and restricting the period individuals can hold leadership positions to two terms.

The voting that took place after a heated debate showed that a majority of the delegates was in favour of a change in the Constitution that had been followed for years.

The votes for the amendment towards a two-tier leadership structure (a 21-member secretariat and a 131-member national council) were 121 for and 96 against. It proved that the majority supported the sentiments expressed in the 15th party Congress at Hyderabad in April last year.

The feeling expressed in the Hyderabad conclave, that a party general secretary holding parallel position in the State should step down, was echoed again in Thrissur. This resolution was amended, providing for a third term to individuals in whose case two-thirds of the national council felt it necessary.

The suggestion that the outgoing national council should prepare a panel of more names than prescribed in the party congress, making it mandatory to hold elections in

party congresses was rejected at the Thrissur session. While 108 voted for this amendment, 125 voted against and five abstained.

Amendments from the floor, seeking an age limit of 70 years for elected posts in the party and imposing the two-term limit in choosing candidates for legislatures and Parliament were rejected by the special congress. Mr. Indrajit Gupta was among those who voted in favour of most of these amendments.

The special congress, after adopting these amendments authorised the national council to complete the formalities and amend the constitution. In a separate resolution moved by Mr. Avtar Singh Malhotra, that was adopted unanimously, it has been laid down that "within four months the national and State councils will take appropriate steps for the transition to two-tier system."

What is involved: The necessary steps will involve excluding some of the members of the present Central executive committee since the CEC (which according to the new set-up suggested will be called national executive committee), which now consists of 31 members will have to be clipped to 21 members. Conceding that the task will be difficult and that dropping a few members could lead to complications, those who favoured this change expected that some of the members will step down on their own.

Similarly, the fact that the national secretariat will no longer be there, the executive will now have to be geared up to react and decide on day-to-day issues.

One member of the secretariat, who had led the opinion against the amendment in the special congress said "Given the fast moving developments and complicated nature, it will be nothing but wishful thinking to demand the abolition of the secretariat."

Those who had voted against the two-tier system included all but one member of the present secretariat, sources confided. The only member who favoured a two-tier system from the secretariat was from Andhra Pradesh, sources added.

Similarly, the implication of the other amendment—two terms limitation to those holding party positions—will have its reflection in the next party congress which should be held before April 1995. Mr Indrajit Gupta is now the general secretary for the second term and it remains to be seen whether the quest for change persists till then.

After the conclave there was a rally and a public meeting at C. [words missing]

Communists Said Under Compulsion to Support Congress (I)

93AS0675E Calcutta SUNDAY MAIL in English
6 Mar 93 p 4

[Text] To support or not to support the Congress government? This is the question which has risen to haunt

the Left time and again. What should be their strategy now? Is the Congress still the enemy numero uno or could they move closer to it, ostensibly to fight their common enemy, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]? How could this dilemma be resolved without losing face?

In the rapidly changing political scenario, the Left has come to play an important role in the game of political survival of governments. When the minority National Front [NF] came to power with the support of the Left Front [LF] and the BJP, either of the two supporting parties could have withdrawn to bring down the government. (It was the BJP which did so eventually in 1990, bringing to an end the 11-month government.) As CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] MP [Member of Parliament] Somnath Chatterjee contends: "No one can ignore the Left anymore, neither its politics, nor its presence."

The Congress has had no qualms in leaning on the Left for support each time they need an ally. Now the ruling party is seeking that support again, and again the Left has been caught in a bind. If it supports the Congress, then it goes against the avowed anti-Congressism. But if it does not, there is the possibility of an unwanted mid-term poll. So which way does it go?

Harkishen Singh Surjeet, the CPI(M) general secretary tried to clarify the position by saying that they would not "bail out" the Congress and unless the government presented a Budget which was in keeping with their policies and principles, the Left would make its displeasure known by opposing them.

However Surjeet could not say whether they would oppose the Budget by abstaining from voting or hoping for a defeat of the Budget by voting against it. Since abstention would mean an implicit support while an outright vote against the motion would clearly indicate their opposition, the indecisiveness on this issue again symbolises the dilemma faced by the Left.

However Surjeet goes on to say that "there is no question of abstaining from voting on substantive issues." Here again, what these substantive issues are and whether or not the stand will be reviewed and changed if it leads to a mid-term poll is not clear since their aversion to elections at this stage is known, having been repeatedly stated by all the Left leaders.

The Congress has been able to exploit this paradox to its advantage. During the no-confidence motion moved by the BJP against the government in the last session of Parliament, the Left preferred to abstain, thus indirectly aiding the Congress. The Congress knows that the Left will not support any motion moved by the BJP even though both the parties are part of the Opposition and therefore logically, should be united against their common adversary, the Congress. The BJP tried to persuade the Left Front to cooperate in floor management in the ongoing Budget session on the grounds that they should unite against their "common enemy." However the Left did not rise to the bait. Probably because

they no longer consider Congress their enemy, much less a common enemy with the BJP. Somnath Chatterjee candidly admits that destabilising the Congress is not their top priority. While he asserts that both the Congress and the BJP are their enemies, he concedes that Congress is the lesser evil. "As far as the issue of communalism is concerned, Congress is the lesser evil. But when it comes to anti-poor policies, the Congress is our enemy," claims the leader of the CPI(M) in the Lok Sabha.

The Left is, in fact, clutching at the Budget as some kind of weapon that it can use not only to protect its own image of oppositional militancy but also with which it can beat the Congress. After criticising the policies of economic liberalisation and the Congress government's dependence on the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Marxist leadership has to prove to its cadre that it has no intention of letting up on its vociferous hostility towards these policies. "If there is no closure of factories and the government decides to continue with the subsidies, we will consider," says Surjeet.

Chatterjee says that they cannot compromise when it comes to policies which affect the poor. But again, how far are they ready to go? If the government does not embarrass them on the exit policy and the issue of subsidies, will the Left protest against the price hike beyond a certain point?

The deciding factor here for both the Congress and the Left seems to be the spectre of mid-term polls. Neither party wants it. Therefore if the Congress desires the support of the Left, it will have to yield certain concessions so that the Left can justify their support to its government. On the other hand, considering the dilemma before the Left, it may not deem it necessary to do so thinking that the Left has very few options before it anyway. However the Marxist leadership is quick to state that it does not want a perpetuation of Congress leadership but given the fragile political situation prevalent in the country, to insist on a change of governance will only spin the country into a deeper debt-trap resulting from the financial burden elections will impose and more importantly, instigate greater communal violence.

The Left says that if elections are held at this juncture, religion will be the deciding factor and not economic issues. But then what is the guarantee that religion will not be the issue whenever elections are held? Once the BJP has opened the Pandora's box and realised its potential to garner more gains for itself, how will anybody restrain it from doing so on all occasions when they need it? The banned BJP rally on February 25 is an example. It is a bid to sustain the temple fervour.

So while insisting that the people will realise that the path shown by the BJP can lead only to violence and deeper communal divisions and tensions, the Left has to be willing to call their bluff.

But if the Left does not want elections will it help to split the Congress and promote a change in its leadership? West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu has met the Prime Minister and the Human Resources Development minister Arjun Singh, separately. While the meeting with the Prime Minister and Basu is seen as a bid by Rao to woo the Left, the meeting with Singh has taken on a different dimension, given the unabashed power struggle going on in the Congress. Surjeet denies that any of the meetings had anything to do with any kind of understanding between the Left and Congress. "Basu is a disciplined comrade of the party and has not deviated from the line taken by the Politburo, neither has he given the impression that he will bail out the Congress. When two political leaders meet, naturally they discuss politics," he says.

The Left is not interested in engineering defections from the Congress. "Why should we want defections? It will lead to a vacuum at the Centre. We are pragmatic about the fact that our influence is limited in the country and the people want centrist forces. But a time will come when we can provide the alternative," claims Chatterjee.

CPM Parliamentary Leader Interviewed on Elections

*93AS0675F Calcutta SUNDAY MAIL in English
6 Mar 93 p 4*

[Interview with Somnath Chatterjee by Swapna Majumdar: "At This Moment Our Influence Is Limited and We Don't Want a Poll"; place and date not given]

[Text] Which way is the Left moving? Is it with the Congress or the National Front [NF]? With the change in political equations and a desire by the Left not to have mid-term polls at this stage, the latter is seen as an ally of the government. But Somnath Chatterjee, leader of the CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist] parliamentary party in the Lok Sabha, denies that the Left faces any kind of political dilemma. "The Congress leans on us when they are isolated. But we are not going to compromise on our principles just to avoid the polls," he told Swapna Majumdar in an interview.

[Majumdar] Is the Left Front-National Front alliance still viable in the present political climate?

[Chatterjee] Yes, the alliance is very much viable. In fact, it is more so now because this is the time for credible centrist forces. The people are disillusioned with the Congress not only because they are fighting amongst themselves in this time of economic distress but also because of their soft attitude towards the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. The Congress also cannot absolve itself of the responsibility of what happened in Ayodhya. So, they cannot project themselves as a centrist force. At the same time, we cannot deny that neither the Left nor the Janata Dal, individually commands influence in all parts of the country. Therefore, the need of the hour is unity and firm action against the communal forces represented by the BJP and its ilk.

[Majumdar] Why is the Left seen as a supporter of the Congress government?

[Chatterjee] This is a highly motivated projection being propagated at the instance of the BJP. We are not pro-Congress as such. On the contrary, when the Congress finds itself isolated, it leans on the Left. Today, the number one enemy is BJP which has, not only attempted to communalise politics but, also succeeded in their efforts. CPM is the only party which has been fighting this menace. The Congress has a very ambivalent stand on this. Secondly, at this point of time, the political climate is not suitable for a mid-term poll because it will only increase the division among the people on religious lines. In addition the country is not ready for the financial burden the polls will impose upon it. Today, people will vote on religion not on economic issues. The BJP will not hesitate to derive political benefits from communal riots. At the same time we are not shying away from poll. If it comes we will have to face it. If we see that the government does not take pronounced steps that are in line with our policies, then we will oppose them. But our concern for not holding the polls now cannot be interpreted as bailing out the government. We have never done that. Only the BJP which supported the Congress has done so.

[Majumdar] What about the decision to fight communal forces together?

[Chatterjee] We don't have any joint programmes to fight communalism together. There is no question of having any understanding. Yes, we cannot deny that Congress is the major party. But it can fight communalism on its own. There may be a common perception of what these communal forces are. But there is no common programme.

[Majumdar] But some Congress leaders like Mamata Banerjee has complained that the understanding between the two has affected their political base in the state because her whole fight is against the CPM?

[Chatterjee] We are not afraid of Mamata Banerjee. Our policies are not dictated by her antics. If she has any grousing against her party's displeasure about her politics then it is between them.

[Majumdar] Has the Congress infighting helped you?

[Chatterjee] We don't want any negative benefit or support.

[Majumdar] What about the meeting between West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu and the Prime Minister?

[Chatterjee] This was not a secret meeting. Surely the Prime Minister and a state chief minister are allowed to meet and hold discussions.

[Majumdar] Importance is being attached to the meeting between Basu and the Human Resource minister Arjun Singh especially in the context of the ongoing power struggle within the Congress.

[Chatterjee] I don't know why so much importance is being given to this meeting. There was no clandestine meeting between the two. This too was an open meeting. They were discussing how to fight against the forces of communalism together. Ayodhya also came up as it did with the Prime Minister.

[Majumdar] Is the CPM willing to extend support or have an understanding with a splintered faction of the Congress led by someone other than Rao?

[Chatterjee] We are not encouraging defections. Why should we? Our purpose is not to break up the Congress. That is not number one on our agenda. If there is a split in the Congress, there will be a vacuum at the Centre and we don't want that. At the same time this does not mean that we want the perpetuation of the Congress. It is just that at this moment our influence is limited and we don't want a poll.

[Majumdar] But isn't this giving indirect support to the Congress?

[Chatterjee] But this is not the right time to have polls. The people will realise the danger and futility of the path followed by the BJP. The BJP cannot provide two square meals by building the temple. They are just trying to set the agenda for the polls by exploiting the sentiments of the people. When we say that we are fighting against communalism and we don't want polls, it doesn't mean that come what may we will continue to support the Congress. We will not compromise on our principles and policies to avoid elections.

[Majumdar] Then when do you think the polls should be held? The BJP will use the religion issue whenever they are held.

[Chatterjee] We have to admit that their influence has percolated down to the roots to a certain extent. They had the advantage of governance in four states and some parts of the bureaucracy and industrial houses are also sympathetic to their cause. We have to wait until they realise the damage BJP is doing to the country. But till then we will continue to fight and convince the people that we can provide a better alternative.

[Majumdar] So you are saying that Left is not in a dilemma about whether or not to support the Congress.

[Chatterjee] There is no dilemma. We are very sure of our path. Our support to the Congress depends on the issues and on our programmes and policies. We are pragmatic about the fact that the Opposition is not evenly balanced here. We cannot live in ivory towers and have illusions. The important fact is that no one can ignore us, the politics and presence of the Left. Even the BJP wants to have floor coordination with us because they say that Congress is the common enemy.

[Majumdar] And is it?

[Chatterjee] For us both the Congress and the BJP are enemies.

[Majumdar] The Congress being the lesser evil?

[Chatterjee] Well, if communalism is the yardstick, yes, Congress is the lesser evil but, not as far as policies for the poor are concerned. Look at the rise in prices over the past year. How can this government be pro-poor? We

have always opposed policies that went against our principles even when we were supporting the National Front government.

[Majumdar] Is this a good time for the CPI [Communist Party of India] and the CPM to come together?

[Chatterjee] Well, we are working together and that is what is more important. There are still some differences between us and they still exist.

Key Infrastructure Sectors Lag Behind
*93AS0698A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 11 Mar 93 p 18*

[Text] Calcutta, March 10. The performance of several infrastructure sectors has fallen below expectations in the current year, between April and December 1992.

While the performance of coal and power has been below target, domestic production of crude has continued to decline since 1989/90, putting pressure on the balance of payments position, according to official sources.

Shipping, railways and telecommunications have been able to meet their targets set for the period, the sources said, adding that the overall economic growth was crucially dependent on the improved performances of adequate investment in key infrastructural sectors.

The sources said that productivity in the coal sector needed to be improved. The output of 158.22 million tonnes reached by December, 1992, was three per cent below target.

The shortfall was almost entirely due to a 12.7 per cent slippage in the output of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited in Adhra Pradesh, because of a disturbed law and order situation.

The sources said that the emphasis in the coal sector has to shift now from simply meeting physical production targets to producing consistently higher quality coal and minimising the build-up of pithead stocks.

Referring to the power sector, they said that the average plant load factor of the state electricity boards has been below expected levels, slipping to even lower levels in the April-December period of 1992, than the same period in 1991.

Pointing out that every one per cent improvement in the plant load factor resulted in the availability of an additional 500 MW, the sources said, during April and December 1992, the gap between requirement and availability of power increased.

The addition to generating capacity at 1948 MW was also lower than the target of 2,575 MW set for the April-December 1992 period, the sources said, adding that the figure was the lowest in the last three years of the same period.

Crude oil production during 1991/92 at 30.34 million tonnes, was 4.6 per cent below the target and 12.4 per cent lower than the peak of 30.09 million tonnes achieved in 1989/90.

Apprehending a pressure on the balance of payments situation due to the declining share on domestic production in total crude consumption in the country, the sources said that the immediate reasons for a decline in the output were major technical constraints.

Turning to ports—a sector which has so far done well—the sources said that productivity had improved in recent years with a decline in ship turnaround days and an increase in the average ship-berth-day output.

On the telecom sector, the sources said that there has been an impressive growth in telephone connections, but demand outstripped supply of direct exchange lines and expansion in switching capacity.

Data on Unutilized Foreign Loans Released
*93AS0709A THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
17 Mar 93 p 21*

[Text] New Delhi, March 16 (UNI)—Loans worth Rs [Rupees] 61,058 crores from foreign donor countries and international financial institutions are lying unutilised with the central government.

According to the official data released, the amount is equivalent to \$19,874 million as on January 1, 1993.

Some of these loans are for augmenting infrastructural facilities that are badly needed in India. For instance, the amount of foreign loan lying unused in the power development sector alone is a staggering Rs 27,743 crores.

Official indecisiveness and bureaucratic procedures are explained to be holding up timely utilisation of these loans which were negotiated by the government for specific projects. Even though the donor country or agency has released this money to the Union government, it is lying idle. The government has to pay interest on these loans irrespective of whether it has been committed to the appropriate projects or not.

Official sources pointed out that interest on unused loans itself formed a big chunk of India's repayment burden. If the projects, for which the loans had been secured, were taken up in time, half of India's problems would not have been there, the sources said.

The biggest chunks of unutilised loans are those negotiated from the World Bank and its affiliate, the International Development Agency (IDA). While the unutilised World Bank loans amount to Rs 15,574 crores, that of the IDA is Rs 14,433 crores.

Among the donor countries, Japan's loans worth Rs 8,213 crores are lying unused. The loans from Germany lying idle amount to about Rs 2,168 crores.

The break-up of the unutilised loans is as follows: (in crores) Asian Development Bank Rs 6,543.29, World Bank Rs 15,574.11, IDA Rs 14,433.71, International Fund for Agriculture Development Rs 103.74, OPEC RS 59.69, Australia Rs 40.21, Austria Rs 25.42, Belgium Rs 12.73, Denmark Rs 32.34, Germany Rs 2,168.32, France Rs 720.89, Italy Rs 36.26, Japan Rs 8,213, Kuwait Fund Rs 124.92, Netherlands Rs 99.64, Saudi Funds Rs 153.31, Sweden Rs 119.02, Switzerland Rs 137.87, United States Rs 95.43 and erstwhile Soviet Union Rs 12,364.47.

Analyst Studies Impact of Budget on the Economy
93AS0705A Madras THE HINDU in English 2 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Prem Shankar Jha]

[Text] Dr. Manmohan Singh's third budget, for 1993-94, has drawn two-and-a-half cheers from the public, industrialists and the political Opposition. Economists, and most industrialists, have welcomed it without reservation, but speculators in the stock market were plainly befuddled; share prices rose and then fell. In the end they decided that they didn't like what they didn't understand. The Left, which has its share of good economists, has not been able to find too much wrong with it, and has been forced to content itself with describing the budget as populist. Others who are not kindly disposed to the Government have described it as a budget of give-aways, designed to rally political support for the Congress(I) and therefore more a product of the ruling party's weakness than the economy's strength.

Economists have welcomed the budget because it has single-mindedly pursued three objectives: a rationalisation of indirect taxes to stimulate industrial growth and replace protection through import bans and prohibitive tariffs with protection by means of a realistic exchange rate; a systematic attempt to eliminate the parallel foreign exchange market and increase the attractiveness of exports, and a sharp increase in Plan spending in the so-called "soft" areas of development—health education and rural development. This was absolutely essential to offset the impact on the poor of structural adjustment policies that lead to cuts in subsidies, increases in prices of products consumed by the poor, and the elimination of some jobs in the short run, and the absence of such a "safety net" was one of the most worrying features of the reforms that had been carried out so far.

The debate around these issues will continue for some time, but the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. The budget will be judged good or bad by what it does to the economy: to the rate of growth, to exports and the balance of payments, to inflation and, most important of all, by the number of jobs that it creates, for this is, and always has been, the touchstone of economic success. By all these yardsticks, there cannot be the slightest doubt that one year from now, the 1993-94 budget will come to be regarded as one of the most important milestones in the country's economic development.

The policies and tax rationalisation announced by Dr. Singh cannot fail to spur industrial growth. Between April and October 1992, this averaged only 3.8 per cent, and thanks to the turmoil unleashed by the destruction of the Babri Masjid, has probably not done much better since then. The sharp cuts in excise duties and the equally decisive cuts in import duties on capital goods, parts, components and raw materials, will revive growth by bringing down production costs and market prices. A sharp spurt in production is inevitable.

However, the more important effect will be on investment intentions. Till the middle of February, over Rs [Rupees] 8,000 crores worth of investment intentions had been registered with the Ministry of Industry. On any road in Delhi or Madras today, on an average, one in three billboards announces a new share capital issue. The total long-term loans sanctioned by the term-lending institutions had increased by 70 per cent and disbursements by 42 per cent—an amount that equalled the spurt that took place after the 1985 budget.

But in the depressed conditions that prevailed, especially in the more modern, import intensive, engineering goods and chemicals sectors, many manufacturers would have held back from committing themselves. That will not now happen. The rise in production of consumer goods by the existing producers that will result from the cuts in taxes, will come on top of a sharp increase in demand for capital goods by the investors. Since the two will reinforce each other it will be most surprising if the industrial growth rate does not rise to nine and perhaps ten per cent this year.

Even nine per cent could turn out to be too conservative because it does not take into account the effect that a strong revival of demand will have on investors' psychology. If the initial recovery is strong, and the next monsoons turn out to be fairly good, there is every chance of an investors' frenzy gripping the manufacturers. The economy could then begin to overheat, as the Chinese economy overheated in 1985. After three years of deepening gloom, that will be welcome change. The news that the harvest of what is likely to increase by as much as nine million tonnes this year, and that the rain throughout the North in the past week will be a boon to the coarse grain harvest, could give the economy its first push in this direction.

What would a boom in investment and production mean for employment? Some Industry Ministry estimates suggest that the Rs. 8,000 crores in the pipeline could create, directly or indirectly, as many as 30 million more jobs. This estimate is far too high—three millions would be a more realistic figure. It does, however, suggest that a sustained investment boom of this magnitude would eliminate a large part of the current backlog of unemployed job-seekers in the country by 2000 A.D.

The budget for 1993-94 marks a sharp departure from its predecessors in yet another way: It is the first one that will dampen the embers of inflation instead of fanning them. Year after year, the indirect tax increases announced in the budget did not only push up prices but became an excuse for the manufacturers who were not affected by the changes to push up theirs too. Thus the cost-push inflation triggered by the budget was invariably far greater than the Government had anticipated.

This year the budget has cut indirect taxes by a whopping Rs. 5522 crores. Since it has done so in the midst of a recession, most of these cuts will be passed on to the consumer (Maruti Udyog's Chairman has already

announced his company's intention to do so). At the very least these tax cuts will offset the effect of the rise in various administered prices that were announced in the weeks preceding the budget. The overall effect will therefore be to phase out protection and subsidies and move towards control of the economy through macro-economic instruments such as the exchange rate and a value added tax, without causing inflation.

A much higher growth rate in industry is bound to come up, very soon, against a variety of supply bottlenecks. The most important of these is the availability of foreign exchange, the demand for which will shoot up with higher industrial growth.

The decision to make the rupee fully convertible on current account for exporters, and to allow the import of consumer goods as part of one's baggage will cause a further decline in demand for foreign exchange in the hawala market. Three years ago, a team sent out by the Reserve Bank of India [RBI] to the Gulf had estimated that the inflow of illegal remittances from there amounted to about \$4 billions a year. The total size of the hawala, worldwide was roughly estimated to be half as large again. If an additional \$2 billions of this trade returns to legal banking channels the rupee is likely to remain as stable next year as it was last year.

The other bottlenecks to more rapid growth are the lack of power, of modern roads, and railway carrying capacity, of airport cargo handling space, and above all a modern telecommunications system. The Finance Minister has paid attention to all of this. The offer of a five-year tax holiday to those who invest in power and other infrastructure projects is the strongest incentive to investment in a specific industry that any Indian Government has ever given.

This budget, presented in the shadow of Ayodhya, at a time when people had begun to suspect that the Government had lost its sense of purpose and direction, should go a long way towards reassuring the Indian middle class and foreign investors that this is not so. But it will give another, unlooked for bonus. In 1985, the Government reduced the incidence of income tax by 40 per cent and instead of losing money as Mr. V.P. Singh anticipated in his budget speech, found itself with a 45-per cent rise in income tax revenues. Something similar will happen this year. Because of the Rs. 2249 crores worth of excise cuts the Government expects these revenues to go up by a mere Rs. 1250 crores. Instead, because of the spurt in industrial growth they are likely to go up by around Rs. 7750 crores. The revenue from customs duties will also not fall because of the increase in imports that are bound to take place. So do not be surprised if the budget deficit virtually disappears next February.

Statement Rebuts Charges on Human Rights

*93AS0706A Madras THE HINDU in English 28 Feb 93
p 11*

[Text] Washington, Feb. 27—In a forthright statement, India has said that Jammu and Kashmir [J&K] has been experiencing an externally-aided "proxy war" of massive dimensions since 1989.

The parties to this war are not two opposing armies, but the forces of a motley group comprising over 100 militant outfits on the one hand, and the law enforcement agencies of the State, which has been reacting to this violent aggression and threat through civilian law and order methods, a statement issued by the Indian Government said.

The statement formed part of India's response to a U.S. human rights report, released here on Saturday, alleging that the Indian security forces had stepped up their "campaign of terror" as the "bloody conflict" entered its fourth year in the Kashmir valley.

Dismissing the report as "biased," India objected to the use in it of terms "armed conflict" and "medical neutrality" in the context of conditions prevailing in the Kashmir valley because these terms "are not only deceptive but could give actual respectability to terrorist organisations and their activities."

The report said even if the security forces in the Kashmir valley were involved in what the Government described as "civilian law and order methods," that did not justify the methods that had been used. These included torture, rape and extra-judicial executions.

The report alleged "torture of detainees and assaults on the medical community in Kashmir" and accused the security forces of routinely violating international humanitarian laws which offered protection to medical workers as well as the wounded and sick.

"Medical catastrophe": It warned of a medical catastrophe unless New Delhi granted immediate access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide medical and humanitarian relief for civilians in the Kashmir valley.

India denied the allegations listed in the report about the denial of medical treatment to the injured. It said that militants who had sustained injuries in counter-insurgency operations got themselves admitted into some hospitals and the staff mostly out of fear and sometimes due to connivance, had not reported such cases to police which must be done under the law in all medico-legal cases. Against this background occasional searches, based on specific information had to be made in the premises of some medical institutions. It was also necessary in some cases, where militants were suspected to feign injuries, to have bandages removed for verification.

However, at no stage had any patient, reported to be critically ill, been subjected to such examination, and also in no case at any stage, had, life-support system been disconnected as alleged in the report, it said.

The statement disagreed with the report's contention that "since the escalation of conflict in 1990, most ordinary health services" in the Kashmir valley had ceased to operate or had been severely curtailed. It also said that "wherever there is transgression, action has been taken."

Action against 100 securitymen: "By now, over the last two years, action has been taken against over 100 securitymen and this has resulted in punishments including imprisonment. UNI

Controversy Over Muslims' Divorce Case Feared

*93AS0684D Calcutta SUNDAY in English 13 Mar 93
pp 37-38*

[Article by Minu Jain, Sraft Chandra and Ranvir Nayar: "Final Justice: Landmark Judgments Award Alimony to Muslim Women"]

[Text] It was the end of a 12-year-old battle for Hameedan, who had been abandoned by her husband in 1981. On February 2, 1993, the Allahabad High Court recognised her rights and awarded maintenance beyond the iddat period of three months and 10 days after divorce.

For Hameedan, life had become hell since the day she, along with her two children, was driven out of home by her husband, Rafiq, who went on to live with another woman without obtaining a divorce. He knew that in case his wife complained, he could seek refuge in the infamous Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986 to avoid paying for his wife's maintenance.

But the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court willed otherwise. Last month, 12 years after her husband deserted her, Hameedan was finally awarded maintenance.

The landmark judgment was replicated in spirit only nine days later. On 11 February, the Bombay High Court awarded maintenance to Faridabano Kadri and Mumtaz Begum. Their husbands had argued that under the Muslim Women's Act, maintenance was restricted only to the iddat period and not for life. But the Bombay High Court, in a historic judgment, has awarded them maintenance till they remarry. Thus thousands of divorced Muslim women in the state who have been deserted by their husbands can now claim alimony.

The message is clear. Maintenance allowance to a divorced Muslim woman can be granted under Section 125 of the CrPC (as applicable to women of all religions). It could also be given under the provisions of the Shariat

or the Muslim Women's Bill of 1986 enacted by the Rajiv Gandhi government in the aftermath of the famous Shah Bano case.

The two judgments have undone everthing the orthodox Muslims had fought for after the Supreme Court had awarded Shah Bano, a housewife from Indore who became an immense controversial figure, maintenance allowance from her husband. The apex court had, in effect, upheld the right of a divorced Muslim woman to get a maximum of Rs [Rupees] 500 per month as maintenance.

The Shah Bano judgment had galvanised the Muslim orthodoxy into a fundamentalist furore. The Supreme Court judgment had bypassed the Muslim Personal law and the Shariat. But the fundamentalists succeeded in the end. The Rajiv Gandhi government bowed to their pressure and enacted the Muslim Women's Bill which effectively nullified the Supreme Court verdict.

According to the Act, a woman would be entitled to "a reasonable and fair provision and maintenance" only within the three-month iddat period and not after that. The only ambiguity was in Section 3 of the Act, which gave a magistrate the power to decide what would be a "fair and reasonable provision."

And, that is exactly what seems to have happened in Lucknow and Bombay. "The courts have recognised the real need for maintenance. The orthodoxy had been totally wrong when they said that the community did not want Section 125. The Act had sought to restrict the rights of Muslim women but judicial interpretation seems to have taken a more liberal view," said advocate Kirti Singh.

In fact, there have been earlier cases in which the Gujarat, Kerala and the Rajasthan High Courts awarded generous maintenance sums to divorced Muslim women. As eminent lawyer Danial Latifi put it, "This course is perhaps the most favourable to women because there is no limit to the amount that can be awarded under the Act. This may not be the most logical but it is the wisest thing to do in the present circumstances."

Meanwhile, the Muslims orthodoxy has seized the Lucknow and Bombay rulings to rake up another controversy as in the Shah Bano case. In Lucknow, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board has decided to take up the issue in a big way and has already approached Hameedan's husband, Rafiq, to appeal in the Supreme Court.

Besides, renowned Shia theologians Maulana Kalbe Sadiq and Maulana Agha Roohi have expressed resentment at the "interference" in the personal law by the Allahabad High Court. Shia leader Maulana Ali Mian is no less disturbed at this "infringement." And on the other side, even lawyers like Abdul Mannan and Zafaryab Jilani, who have been the focus of media attention as members of the Babri Masjid Action Committee, are gearing themselves to project Hameedan's case as a rallying point for the Muslims.

But it would be worthwhile to ask whether Islam forbids maintenance for a divorced woman? Do the maulvis have any solid ground for their "religious struggle?"

The answer seems to be a resounding no.

The question of alimony is admittedly a controversial one. When India was in the throes of the Shah Bano controversy, Egypt was also debating a similar issue. Finally, the 1000-year-old Al Azhar University in Cairo, which has been the centre of Islamic scholarship, unanimously concluded that alimony was not only permitted but enjoined by Islamic juristic principles.

And, the Egyptian Parliament passed a law stating, "A wife properly married and divorced by her husband without her consent and without any reason (i.e., fault) of her own shall be entitled over and above her maintenance to a compensation amounting to maintenance for two years, at least.."

In fact, the fatwa issued by theologians in India during the Shah Bano controversy came in for considerable flak by Islamic religious leaders abroad.

"The Muslim orthodoxy is skating on thin ice," said a leader, pointing to the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act of 1939 to further bolster his point. It was an Act which had the unanimous support of Muslims of the entire subcontinent, including Jinnah. Its statement of objects and reasons stated definitively, "There is no proviso in the Hanafi code of Muslim law enabling a married Muslim woman to obtain a decree from the court dissolving her marriage in case the husband neglects to maintain her, makes her life miserable by deserting or persistently maltreating her ... the absence of such a provision has entailed unspeakable misery to innumerable Muslim women in British India. The Hanafi jurists, however, have clearly laid down that in case which the Hanafi law causes hardship it is permissible to apply the Maliki, Shafi or Humbali law.

The implications are clear. The Hanafi law is ambivalent on the question of maintenance. But the Muslim leaders of the subcontinent had decided in 1939 that if this ambivalence caused "hardship" to women they could take recourse to either the Maliki, Shafi or Humbali law (the second set of laws governing Muslims).

And, Imam al Shafei, for instance, whose dictums form the basis of Islamic doctrines, had been quite clear on the issue.

It is a myth, propagated by vested interests, that Islam prohibits alimony. Or that it provides the easy way out for the man. "the Koran itself contains provisions to restrain divorce that our theologians have treated as a dead letter. There is hence scope for legislation to strengthen these rights in favour of women," said Latifi, suggesting an international convention on alimony to settle the matter once and for all.

Otherwise, the issue will continue to fester. And, another Shah Bano is the last thing the country needs.

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